

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADITIONAL  
AND ONLINE STUDY ABROAD ORIENTATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

One of the factors that allow students to be successful on study abroad programs is orientation. Since the University of Oregon (UO) is a public university with financial constraints, its Study Abroad Programs Office has limited staff for programming. One way to alleviate the time and staff constraints is by conducting orientation online. This study investigated which delivery method, traditional/classroom-based or online, was the most effective in students' views. A total of 11 students were interviewed, eight who experienced classroom-based and three web-based orientations. All participants expressed positive views of their experiences abroad. Results showed that the majority of the classroom-based participants would have enjoyed an online orientation if they were given the opportunity. Online participants appreciated the web-based orientation and expressed that they would not have enjoyed a classroom-based orientation. They recommended that it continue being online. Although there were mixed opinions of web- versus classroom-based orientations, the majority gave positive comments regarding online delivery. Students appreciated its video clips, multiple viewings option and the convenience factor. Several recommendations are made to UO Study Abroad Programs to improve their orientation process, such as making the online orientation more interactive, including more student perspectives and experiences and making it more reader-friendly.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Study Abroad**

As the United States becomes increasingly global, there is a stronger demand for citizens to contribute broader perspectives to our diverse society. One way of meeting this multicultural demand is by studying abroad. A report by NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2006) states, "An educational opportunity outside the United States can be among the most valuable tools for preparing a student to participate effectively in an increasingly interconnected international community that demands cross-cultural skills and knowledge" (p. 5). Many universities offer international education opportunities. Such opportunities include studying, internships or service learning abroad. According to the *Open Doors* annual report by the Institute of International Education, the number of students participating in these programs for the 2005-06 academic year reached record figures for a total of 223,534 (2007). Included in the list of institutions with international programs and ranking 43, is the University of Oregon (UO).

Benefits of study abroad to individuals include, but are not limited to, personal growth, intercultural development, and education and career attainment (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). In addition, many note a vast number of benefits to society at large. For example, Johnson and Mulholland (2006) state that "...it is the national security, foreign policy, U.S. leadership, and economic competitiveness benefits that cause study abroad to rise from an educational to a public policy concern" (p. 7).

In order to maximize the benefits of study abroad and to enhance the experiences of students, professionals in the field believe that pre-departure orientation is a key factor. Most study abroad programs offer orientations. Recently, offices have begun to offer these orientations

through different delivery methods. This study will examine which delivery method of general study abroad orientation, classroom-based or online, is perceived by students at the UO as more effective.

### **Study Abroad Orientation**

Universities that offer study abroad programs usually offer students orientations before their overseas experiences. *Resources for Education Abroad Offices and Advisers*, a publication by NAFSA, states that orientation is the first step to studying abroad and is therefore a crucial step for all students to undertake (2006). Carmical deems orientation classes obligatory (2002).

Weinmann, Bragg & Behr (1993) note that “most students who have no guidance or structure for learning the necessary skills [in orientation] will not do their best or regret the [study abroad] experience” (p. 4).

Orientation is a time to discuss all aspects of the study abroad program, the host country and issues that face students overseas. Some key components of orientation are academic/home university policies (credits, grades, financial aid and conduct); practical matters (travel & arrival, visas, medical information, finance and what to pack); health, safety and security information; host institution and/or onsite staff information; cultural matters (introduction to host country, cultural adjustment and issues related to women, minorities, religion); life in the host culture (language, food, money and legal issues); resources (websites, books, newspapers and films) and maps/photos (NAFSA, 2006).

The traditional way of delivery for a study abroad orientation has been face-to-face or a traditional/classroom-based style interaction with study abroad advisors and students. Often study abroad staff solicit help from study abroad returnees. Advisors largely believe it is both

reasonable and necessary to require attendance at study abroad orientation (Summerfield, 1993). However, many offices are now putting orientation materials and the actual orientation online, joining a national trend in study abroad programming (NAFSA, 2006). To date, there appears to be no study of students' views of this alternative delivery method.

### **Web-based versus Traditional Education**

There is a myriad of research on general education and how its different delivery methods fit into the overall learning process. This information can help inform the educational process of study abroad orientations and what methods would best suit those studying abroad. Some authors suggest that progress in innovative technology in higher education has improved the quality of many web-based courses (Schott, Chernish, Dooley & Lindar, 2003). Over the past several years studies have been conducted to compare aspects of the classroom-based instruction with online instruction (Rivera, McAlister & Rice, 2002). The results have been mixed. Miller, Rainer, and Corley (2003) find that the more negative aspects experienced by students using web-based instruction included procrastination, poor attendance, and a sense of isolation. In another study, researchers found that certain personality types, people that are extroverts and those that are more intuitive, prefer and find the online environment more effective than classroom-based delivery methods (R. Daughenbaugh, L. Daughenbaugh, Surry, & Islam, 2002). French, Hale, Johnson and Farr (1999) consider that web-based learning is geared towards self-directed learners that have control over not only their learning time and pace, but also the objectives or learning outcomes. Mentzer et al. (2007) find that student performance on tests were equivalent in both types of courses, although other aspects such as final grades were lower in the web-based courses because of incomplete assignments. In general there is a consensus that students learn



just as well using web-based instruction, but are less satisfied with the learning experience (Mentzer, Cryan & Teclehaimanot, 2007).

Continuing efforts are pushing technology into the educational arena, yet some researchers have concluded that the traditional delivery method of face-to-face interaction is very unique. For instance, Kincannon (2002) states, “Technology can support and enhance teaching but the technology itself cannot replace the unique role of teacher in any learning situation” (p. 4). This personalized mode of information transfer is something computer screens and keyboards cannot fully replicate. For instance, Kincannon finds in web-based instruction the spontaneity of questions and the flexibility of the answers are considerably diminished; there is also a lack of constructive feedback and personal interaction (2002).

In general, an ongoing debate regarding the efficacy of online versus face-to-face education continues to challenge higher education professionals. While there have been numerous studies on why face-to-face interactions and/or online classes are more successful in general education, the effectiveness of different delivery methods of study abroad orientations have not been examined. This research project seeks to compare students’ views of the effectiveness of traditional or face-to-face orientations to that of online orientations in order to provide information in planning better orientations for future students who wish to study abroad. The University of Oregon provided a test-case example.

### **University of Oregon (UO)**

The UO is renowned in the Pacific Northwest for the high number of students it sends abroad each year. UO Study Abroad Programs has numerous opportunities for overseas education. The UO offers over 140 study abroad programs in more than 80 countries. Currently the University

sends over 1,000 students abroad each year (University of Oregon, 2007). The institution continuously seeks to increase the number of participants.

The UO is a public university with financial constraints and Study Abroad Programs has a limited number of staff who are working at maximum capacity. The staff genuinely wants every student to be successful in their programs abroad and to that end invests much employee time and dedication to helping students reach this goal. The limited number of employees, combined with a push to increase participant numbers, has created a challenge for the department: how can it serve the increasing numbers of students while maintaining the quality of support and guidance that is deemed necessary.

Included in this challenge is the investment of time in the orientation process required for all students prior to traveling abroad. To help promote a student's success in his/her international experience, it is vital to provide an effective orientation. One way to alleviate the time and staff constraints while maintaining the efficiency and good customer service of the department is to utilize technology.

### **UO Study Abroad Orientation Process**

The overall orientation process is two-tiered: general and program-specific. The program-specific aspect is the second part of the process and is not the focus of this study. It is always classroom-based with a cohort of students participating in the same study abroad program, and there are no plans to change this approach.

Up through the fall 2007 the general orientation program was classroom-based. It was held every academic term and students were required to attend if they were leaving to study abroad

the following quarter. During fall and winter terms, the general orientation was held on a weekday in the late afternoon through the early evening. The most recent general orientation, in May 2007, was held on a Saturday afternoon to accommodate the high number of students studying abroad in the summer and fall of 2007.

The general orientation was a three-hour program, with the first hour devoted to various speakers such as the director or the vice provost of the office, a Health Center nurse and a representative from the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. The students were then asked to break out and attend two out of three workshops: Gender Issues, Culture Shock and Housing Abroad. Study Abroad Programs staff ran the workshops. Students who could not attend the mandatory orientation were asked to attend a make-up orientation in the Study Abroad Programs Office, which required them to watch a video of the orientation and concurrently complete a quiz.

Beginning in fall 2007, for participants going abroad winter 2008, the general orientation process changed to an online system. The current online general orientation is on Blackboard, a course management application for the university. Students must read the instructions prior to starting the online orientation. There are seven chapters in the orientation: Academic Preparations, Health/Safety & Conduct, Housing Adjustment, Intercultural Adjustment, Identity & Adjustment, Money Matters and Travel Preparations. Students must read each chapter and view several video clips, depending on the chapter. The video clips include: a faculty member from the International Studies Department, a nurse from the Health Center, a representative from the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, Disability Services, Office of Multicultural Academic Support and from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender Educational

Support Services Program. At the conclusion of each chapter is a quiz in which students must receive a score of 100% in order to proceed to the next chapter. Students can retake each quiz as many times as are needed to get 100% correct.

The students typically have a month to complete the online orientation. Once a student applies to a study abroad program, he/she is entered into the student database and the orientation coordinator enrolls the student into the orientation. The earlier the student applies, the longer the student has to complete the orientation before the determined deadline. The later the student applies to a program, the less time they have to complete the online orientation (although it is still a reasonable amount of time for completion). There are several email reminders to the enrolled students to complete the orientation by the determined deadline.

### **Research Question**

This study will compare students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the general online orientation and the "live" general orientation at the University of Oregon. Specifically, this study seeks to examine which form of study abroad orientation delivery, classroom-based or web-based, UO students believe to be more effective in preparing them for successful international experiences. This information will then allow UO Study Abroad Programs to improve their orientation process for future students studying abroad.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Subjects for the study were UO study abroad students who participated in five Northwest Council on Study Abroad (NCSA)/AHA International (AHA) programs, during Fall term 2007 and Winter term 2008. The NCSA/AHA program model, which happens to be the most popular

with UO students, is one of the many types of program models offered at the UO. NCSA/AHA programs proved a good fit for this study because each program has a similar design, including a site director, a faculty member from a college in the Northwest U.S. teaching in the program, and cultural excursions. Also included is the fact that they are “island” programs, meaning cohorts consist mostly of students from the Pacific Northwest and/or just American students. The following NCSA/AHA sites were chosen for the study because they offer sessions both fall and winter terms: London, England; Vienna, Austria; Morelia, Mexico; Siena, Italy; and Macerata, Italy. Students who studied abroad Fall term 2007 completed the traditional “live” orientation in May 2007. Students who studied abroad Winter term 2008 completed the online orientation in November 2007.

Subjects were primarily obtained through convenience sampling. Their names were pulled from the internal student database used by UO Study Abroad Programs. The database listed 32 students from fall term and 15 students from winter term. Three recruitment emails, sent approximately one week apart from each other, were sent to the fall group and the winter group (excluding those who had previously responded). The recruitment emails were sent out by the Associate Director of Study Abroad Programs.

The email (See Appendix A) contained a brief explanation of the study, which included an incentive for participating (a \$100 UO Bookstore gift certificate drawing). Snowball sampling was used to increase sample size when there was a lack of responses to the initial emails in which emails were again sent to those who had already participated, asking them to solicit their cohorts for the study. Some forwarded the recruitment emails to friends who studied with them in the overseas program and one student utilized his Facebook page he created for his study

abroad group. If students wanted to participate they were asked to respond to the researcher. Once an email was received by the researcher, a response was sent which included eligibility questions regarding attendance or completion of the general orientation and if students were currently in Eugene to complete an in-depth interview. If participants were eligible, a date and time for interviewing was confirmed through further email communication. The sample consisted of two groups. The first group was comprised of eight fall term program participants, all of whom had a classroom-based orientation. The second included three winter term students, all of whom had an online orientation. There were no participants from the Vienna, Austria and Morelia, Mexico program.

Interviewees were verbally informed of the study particulars before the interview and given a chance to ask questions. They were then asked to sign a written consent form that included permission to record the interview (See Appendix B). Approval for the study was obtained from the University of Oregon's Office for Protection of Human Subjects.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because study abroad experiences, from beginning to end, application to reentry, are difficult to express in just a few words or by categorical numbers and boxes. Study abroad experiences encompass a complex web of feelings and emotions and this type of information, although not entirely impossible, could be difficult to acquire from a quantitative study. The interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes and a digital recorder was used. The interview included 11 questions in addition to demographic questions (See Appendix C). It included queries about the students' overall study abroad experience, the valuable and enjoyable

components of the general orientation, as well as opinions on live vs. online orientation and recommendations.

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and were analyzed manually (See Appendix D). Transcripts were coded for themes and were compared between the two interview groups.

## **RESULTS**

### **Demographics**

Of the eight classroom-based orientation participants five were women and three were men. All but two identified themselves as Caucasian; the other two identified themselves as Japanese and the other as Arab/Other. Seven of them had traveled abroad before. Four had been outside of North America, one had traveled within North America and one had not left the United States. The other two had not only traveled abroad but had studied abroad as well, one of them as an international student at the UO. Six attended the Macerata, Italy program. One attended another Italy program in Siena and the last went to London, England. Six of the students lived in apartments, five Macerata students and the one Siena student, while the other two, the sixth student on the Macerata program and the one London student lived with host families. Most of the students were either 20 or 21 years of age while they were abroad, with one student being 19 and the other being 23 years old. The majority of the students were juniors and seniors with one student being a sophomore. There were ten different majors represented, two participants with double majors. The majors were: Biology, English, Environmental Studies, General Science, International Studies, Italian, Journalism, Psychology, Romance Languages and Sociology. There were six students with minors and five different minors represented: Business, Chemistry, Education, Italian and Music.

There were three online orientation participants and all were women. All of them identified themselves as Caucasian. They had previous travel experience within North America. All three attended the London, England program and lived with host families. Two of the students were 21 years old at the time of their overseas experiences and the other was 20 years old. There were two juniors and one senior. There were three majors represented: Education, English and Journalism. All three had minors and represented two different minors: Business and History.

### **Classroom-based General Orientation**

The sections below summarize the themes that were drawn from the eight interviews of the students that attended the classroom-based orientation. The topics covered are as follows: enjoyable and valuable aspects of orientation, effect of orientation, opinions regarding the two-tiered orientation process, preference of web- versus classroom-based orientation, suggestions for the study abroad orientation and quality of study abroad experience.

### **Enjoyable Aspects of Orientation**

Students mentioned a number of different enjoyable aspects to the orientation. A majority of the students expressed how much they enjoyed meeting people who were going abroad to different countries as well as listening and talking to the students who had returned from their overseas study and were volunteering at the orientation. One subject commented, “Listening to people who actually went on a study abroad program before and who have experienced all the different cultural experiences– that was useful.” Students appreciated socializing with their peers at orientation because it reinforced a sense of incredible pride that each individual was going overseas to represent the UO. “...to see all the other students that were going abroad and seeing my friends and knowing where they were going and getting all excited together.” Overall, the



students appreciated the networking aspect with other students, enjoyed the excitement and support from fellow peers and learned about what they could expect going abroad from past participants and staff.

### **Value of Orientation**

The value that students put on the general orientation was varied. For some, it gave them an idea of what to expect and the issues they might face while abroad. For instance, one student stated, “It gives you ideas, problems that people face when studying abroad or issues that are involved or how another country will be different to get yourself prepared...” However, some felt the orientation was not valuable. “It was a waste of time. I didn’t think the large orientation was helpful at all.” This comment, however, was the most negative comment given. Although this student had an overall positive experience abroad she tended to describe her thoughts throughout the interview in somewhat of a negative light.

### **Effect of Orientation**

The students were also asked if the orientation affected their time abroad. The majority said it influenced them to some extent. This statement is typical of these students: “That [orientation] helped a lot because you could see yourself going through the stages [of culture shock] when you were there. It was nice that we had been taught about them ahead of time so that we could recognize it and realize it’s natural, normal, just let it progress.” There were, however, some who said it did not affect their time abroad. For instance, one of these students said, “It didn’t really affect me too much...I think it would have stuck out more in my mind if I hadn’t been abroad before.”

### **Opinions Regarding the Two-Tiered Orientation**

Opinions of whether or not to have a two-tiered orientation were varied. The general and program-specific orientations for this group of students were both classroom-based. There was not a strong sentiment that the general orientation should end. The program-specific orientations were seen as helpful. "I liked that [program-specific orientation], it was good. It was focused on Macerata and I learned what to expect." The majority said it was important to have both, but several mentioned combining the two. "I would just say the program-specific [was best] because you could incorporate things from the general into the program-specific."

### **Web- versus Classroom-based Orientation**

When participants were asked a hypothetical question of whether they would have learned as much if the general orientation were online, over half mentioned that they would. "I think web-based would be just as insightful and even more so because you can go back and check on it and read it again and keep it fresh in your head." In addition, one student said that the "live" orientation had "too many people and so it's not personal at all." Another said if the office really wanted students to learn from the process, the online orientation would be better because students would have the option of picking and choosing information germane to their needs.

In contrast, there were a few students that had strong opinions about learning better in a classroom setting. The key reasons why students said they preferred the "live" orientation was because of the interaction with other people going abroad and listening to the returning students' experiences. "I prefer the 'live' because the internet is closed off and you don't get a broader perspective, whereas in a face-to-face orientation process you can talk to a lot people and do group activities." Another stated that if they had questions, they could just ask; but if someone

else were to ask a question that the student hadn't thought about, they would learn something new. One said, "I love personable aspects of life and it saddens me that the world is becoming so separated thanks to the internet instead of face-to-face." However, a few of these students, despite their strong positive views on the "live" orientation, commented on the convenience factor of the online orientation as being helpful and a reason why students could prefer the online over the classroom-based orientation.

### **Suggestions**

One suggestion that arose was to offer a country-specific orientation instead of the general to learn more intricate details on the country as well as connect with other students going to the same country. A few recommended shortening the three-hour session. Some requested games, offer questionnaires for students to get them thinking ahead about their country, talk more about reverse culture shock and discuss more about possible political situations abroad. In terms of the general orientation switching to an online version, students said if that were to happen, the office should definitely continue to have the program-specific orientations in-person and also include a program like iChat or an email system for questions on the online orientation.

### **Views and Quality of Study Abroad Experience**

All eight of the students had positive experiences abroad. They were asked about their overall experience abroad, their housing situation and their experience with the site director and Northwest faculty member. One participant said, "It was a really life changing experience...growing up as a person, being on my own...learning new perspectives, it was a very positive experience." Three students described their overall experiences as "fun" and living situations as good. However, the rest of the students had neutral living experiences.

Views regarding the staff were overwhelmingly positive. In terms of having a site director on the program, the responses were all positive. “He [site director] is everything you want in a program director, very kind and knowledgeable and he has stories about everything and he just really has a good heart. He cares about all the students...” Another component of a NCSA/AHA program is having a Northwest faculty member. The students enjoyed having access to this faculty member and had only positive comments. One interviewee stated, “That was great. I had a great time and she [Northwest faculty] helped out too. It’s nice to have her perspective of Eugene and Italy... to help us along.”

In summary, the classroom-based students had an overall positive experience abroad. Most of the students enjoyed the personal, people-meeting aspect of the orientation, however, there were varying opinions regarding the value and effect of the orientation. There were students that appreciated having the two-tiered orientation process, although some mentioned combining the two. In general, there were more positive comments regarding a hypothetical option of an online orientation. Over half mentioned they would have learned just as much if it were online. There were also those who were adamant about the orientation being in-person, despite the fact that they could also see the benefits of an online orientation in terms of convenience.

### **Online General Orientation**

The sections below summarize the topics addressed in the interviews of the three students that completed the online general orientation. The information is slightly less than from the classroom-based group due to the lower number of study participants. The topics covered are as follows: enjoyable and valuable aspects of orientation, effect of orientation, opinions regarding

the two-tiered orientation process, preference of web- versus classroom-based orientation, suggestions and quality of study abroad experience.

### **Enjoyable, Valuable Aspects of Orientation and its Effect**

In analyzing students' responses regarding the value and enjoyable aspects of orientation, two positive themes appeared. The first was that they enjoyed the video clips because they didn't have to read everything. One said: "Using real life testimonies, being told things was a lot better than reading it all. It adds more." The second theme that arose was the convenience factor. "We could kind of spread it out...where you can pick and choose when you wanted to just read...we could read something and then later go back and look at it again." Students viewed the option of being able to read something and later being able to go back to review it as helpful. However, when asked how it affected their study abroad experience, the overall answer was it had no effect. However, one student commented on how it helped her prepare mentally in terms of living in a culturally diverse city.

### **Opinions Regarding the Two-Tiered Orientation**

All participants expressed the desire to continue having both general and program specific types of orientation. "I like the program-specific orientation just because I got to see people who were going to be in my program...detailed information that you might need. I think the general one is good, especially if you haven't been out of the country before, like I hadn't been." Although this same student mentioned that the program-specific orientation was more important than the general, she mentioned the importance of the general orientation as well.

## **Web- versus Classroom-based Orientation**

In analyzing students' responses regarding whether or not they would have learned as much in a web- or classroom-based orientation, three themes appeared. First, all students mentioned that the online general orientation would be better than a "live" general orientation. They were weary of retaining the information in a "live" three-hour orientation. "The online was a lot nicer because we weren't forced to sit and hear all of it at one take, at once. We could read something and have a while to think about it and come back and hear something else." However, one student said it probably depends on the student. Personally, she might have enjoyed the "live" orientation more because she would have retained more, but questioned how much people would really take in during a three-hour orientation. She did mention being able to access Blackboard at her leisure made the online orientation appealing yet could see the benefits of both types of delivery methods. This leads to the second theme that arose, the convenience factor, which was mentioned multiple times. Lastly, the third theme that arose was that all three of them considered themselves competent in their online/computer abilities. One said, "...a lot of people these days are online savvy and if they can do it on a computer instead of go to class I think they would rather almost do that."

## **Suggestions**

There were a few suggestions for improving the general orientation process. It was recommended to continue the general orientation online while still doing the program-specific orientations face-to-face. Another suggestion was to make it more interactive.

## **Views and Quality of Study Abroad Experience**

The students had very positive experiences abroad. One said, “It was eye-opening for me especially since I was born here in Eugene and raised here my whole life. I just needed to get out and do something new and meet people...it was a great program and I became a lot more cultured.” They also commented positively on their living situations: “When we went to Italy for break, I was kind of feeling homesick while I was in Italy, but I wasn’t feeling homesick for Eugene, I was feeling homesick for my home in London because the mom made it so great for us.” When asked to comment on their site director, the students had nothing but overly positive comments, “We went on five different excursions around England and I wouldn’t have gone to those places if it weren’t for him [site director]. It would have been an overall different experience if it weren’t for the excursions. I enjoyed having a site director.” For the Northwest faculty, students were similarly positive. “I was really sad I didn’t take a class from her. I wish I had. She was another good resource and it was nice to have her from the UO because she knew our background.”

In summary, the three students enjoyed and valued the online orientation and had positive study abroad experiences. The students enjoyed the video clips and appreciated the convenience factor as well as the fact that they could go back to the materials online at their leisure. The students expressed the importance of both types of orientation. They enjoyed the program-specific orientation being classroom-based but mentioned that the general should continue being online.

## **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from so few subjects, the results give a good starting point to how UO students feel in regards to the delivery method of the general study abroad

orientation at the UO. Despite the method of orientation, the students had positive experiences abroad, which can be correlated to good preparation and orientation. Since the students all had positive experiences abroad, one could say that both types of orientation were to some extent effective but one method perhaps being slightly more effective in students' perceptions. The results suggest that the students appreciated the online method or the thought of an online orientation for the general orientation, despite the actual delivery method they experienced. Since there was not a subject who completed both methods of orientation, a question regarding which method was better could not be asked but a hypothetical question was posed for each subject. The views of the students that had the classroom-based orientation were varied and mixed, however, when asked to give an opinion regarding if they would have learned as much from an online orientation, over half responded positively. There were also those that were adamant about the orientation being in-person, however, they mentioned that they could also see the benefits of an online orientation in terms of convenience. Some probably felt skeptical of the online idea since often times, ideas in the abstract can be daunting.

The students who completed the online orientation had very favorable views of the delivery method and recommended continuing the general orientation as web-based. When they were asked the hypothetical question of whether or not a "live" orientation would be better, they mentioned that they did not want to sit and listen for a long period of time, believing it would cause them to lose concentration. The students enjoyed the video clips in the online orientation and appreciated the convenience factor of the process as well as the fact that they could go back to the materials online at their leisure.



Students are encouraged to complete evaluations of their study abroad program. The evaluations are provided to all students on the program (not just to UO students) and they have the option of remaining anonymous. The information gathered from the evaluations from the programs the study participants were on are somewhat similar to this study. For the classroom-based participants, the value of the home campus orientation was varied for each study abroad program but the overall score was slightly above average. The evaluations for the online participants had slightly higher scores. Although it seems like online participants evaluated their home campus orientation higher, perhaps because they enjoyed the online orientation, it is difficult to glean precisely from these evaluations since it is numerically based and comments are optional. It was also difficult to determine if the study participants completed an evaluation since not everyone interviewed for this study were listed in the evaluations due to being anonymous or because they did not complete an evaluation. An interesting note is that the Macerata fall program and the London winter program had the highest score for home campus orientation, which were the programs that had UO professors. Perhaps these students felt like their home campus orientation continued throughout their program.

The findings from this study are similar to the literature on the mixed opinions about web- and classroom-based instruction. Although the majority appreciated the online method or the thought of one, there were still some that were adamant about the classroom-based orientation. Literature shows that students of online-based instruction learn just as well as classroom-based learners but perhaps are less satisfied with the learning experience. This study reflects this statement since the participants had positive experiences abroad, but had varying experiences and opinions with the delivery method of orientation. Perhaps the students that appreciated the online orientation or the thought of one were the extroverted or intuitive types that

Daughenbaugh et al. (2002) mention in their study. Having different personality types is inevitable and so complementing the online orientation with “live” program-specific orientations would help serve these varying personality types as well as voluntary “live” workshops related to orientation topics.

None of the previous literature that I found addressed using web-based methods for orientations to study abroad programs. Thus, this study adds to the literature by focusing on this issue and comparing students’ reactions to two different delivery methods.

### **Policy Implications**

UO Study Abroad Programs is following the trend of the many universities across the U.S. that are now conducting their study abroad orientation online. Utilizing online general study abroad orientation methods will allow UO Study Abroad Programs to continue reducing its cost for orientation, while providing quality service for its students and allowing time for staff to focus on other programming. More programming efforts can lead to an increase in the numbers of students that study abroad which will further help the national goal of creating more global citizens that can assist with future public policy efforts. UO Study Abroad Programs was hoping to see a positive result in the vein of changing its delivery method for the general orientation and will appreciate the positive results of the study.

This study may be important for the field of Public Administration because often times there can be financial constraints in the public sector. While online-savvy millennials are preparing to graduate, the public sector must be prepared in hiring this new generation of broad-minded professionals– those that are open to varying methods of learning via technology. Orientations and trainings for public administrators could start looking at putting their materials online if they

are to keep up with the generational trend. Employees could appreciate having trainings and orientations that fit their needs and interests and will hopefully help with retaining highly motivated and skilled professionals. If trainings are to be effective for the next generation of public administrators, staff should start considering conducting their trainings via new media.

### **Future Research**

Further studies could include having several students complete both the “live” and online orientations in addition to a similar qualitative study. However, this could be a challenging and labor intensive endeavor. A quantitative study of surveys may be helpful in getting a broader perspective of answers. Researching what other universities do in terms of their delivery method for study abroad orientations would also be helpful for the University of Oregon. In addition, results from this study could be shared with other universities or at international education conferences in order to delve deeper into seeking which delivery method is more effective for students that study abroad.

There were several limitations to the interviews, including the employment of convenience and snowball sampling. There were also two timing-related factors that could have affected the interviews. First, there was a significant time lag after the fall students attended the general orientation. The fall students had their general orientation in May 2007 and were interviewed in April 2008, about 11 months after they had their orientation, which could have affected their memory of the orientation. Some even mentioned it was difficult to remember that far back or they would often times get confused with the general and program-specific orientations. In contrast, with the winter students only five months had passed since they had completed the online orientation. Second, the fall students had been back to the UO for four months, whereas

the winter students had recently returned to the UO. The fall students could have had a longer time to reflect on their study abroad experiences and orientation process. Conversely, having an experience so fresh in their minds could have magnified responses as well.

Despite the incentive for the \$100 gift certificate drawing, it was difficult to obtain winter interviews. There were three interviews, all from the same study abroad site, compared to the eight interviews for the fall students. Representation of UO student opinions could have been limited because of the narrowing of NCSA/AHA programs. The highest number of students who responded were from programs that had UO faculty onsite, which could have created a bias. Another limitation may have been the researcher's multiple roles as researcher and Study Abroad Programs staff, which could have tainted the quality of the interviews by the participants not expressing their honest opinions with some of the questions.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the study, there are several recommendations. First, UO Study Abroad Programs should continue using the web as its delivery method for the general study abroad orientation. Another recommendation is to create a more interactive orientation by including functions where students can chat or discuss with students, whether it is with prospective students going abroad or with returnees or even with Study Abroad Programs staff to retain some of the personal contact liked by classroom-based orientation participants. In terms of content several mentioned wanting more information about transportation issues abroad and advice for when political discussions arise abroad. A few also mentioned that if they had studied abroad before, then the information given in the general orientation would not have been as useful and so perhaps having different content for those who have studied abroad versus those who had not.

Also, continuing the program-specific orientation “live” is a good idea if the department decides to keep the general orientation online. In addition, the program-specific orientation could be reevaluated as well since there were comments regarding combining the two types of orientation. The orientation can be more reader-friendly, less “wordy” as some students referred to it as and include information deemed vital by participants in this study.

Aside from the study, other recommendations would be to incorporate video clips of past participants and their experiences abroad, since the current video clips are of administrators and/or faculty and students enjoy hearing from returnees. This would help some of the comments given by students that attended the classroom-based orientation that enjoyed hearing stories and advice from past study abroad students. To address the negative comments regarding an online orientation, Study Abroad Programs could provide voluntary workshops on certain orientation topics so that there could be more face-to-face interaction and networking amongst students. There could also be more activities or assignments that students must complete prior to starting the online general orientation or before going to their program-specific orientation in order to facilitate a more active learning process for preparing to study abroad. Adding activities such as these might also cater to the varying personality types and help with the personable aspects that some students enjoy of a classroom-based orientation. The online system it currently uses, Blackboard, was not questioned in the study; however, another system could be looked at for further improvements to the online orientation. Currently the students are withdrawn once they have completed the orientation, however, creating a way to retain them on Blackboard will be helpful for students to be able to re-look at the materials right before they go abroad or during their time abroad.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **FIRST RECRUITMENT EMAIL for in-depth interviews**

*(The Associate Director of Study Abroad Programs will send this email on my behalf and it will be sent to each group of students using the BCC function)*

Dear [Fall 2007] or [Winter 2008] AHA/NCSA Study Abroad Students,

I hope this email finds you doing well. A graduate student in the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management, Shun Yanagishita, is working on her exit project and is doing her research on students' perception of the effectiveness of the UO's general study abroad orientation program.

She would like to invite students to participate in an interview. The interview should take between 45 minutes to an hour. Every interview participant will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to the UO Duckstore. If you are interested in participating, please email Shun Yanagishita at: [shun@uoregon.edu](mailto:shun@uoregon.edu)

Participation for this interview is completely voluntary. If you decide to not participate, this will not affect your relationship with or services received from Study Abroad Programs.

Thank you,

Cari Vanderkar Moore

Associate Director for Study Abroad Programs



**FOLLOW-UP EMAIL for in-depth Interviews**

*(This email will be sent to those willing to participate in the interview)*

Dear Student [first name],

Thank you for your email and your willingness to participate in this interview. Your participation will help analyze the effectiveness of the UO's study abroad orientation process.

I would like to know a few things before we can set up an interview:

1. Did you participate and attend the "live" orientation in May 2007 (for Fall 2007 participants) or complete the "online" orientation in November 2007 (for Winter 2008 participants)? *(This question will depend on which term the student studied abroad)*

2. Also, are you currently in the Eugene area?

I would like to schedule an interview with you sometime soon. The interview should take no longer than an hour to complete. Please email me some blocks of time that you are available to meet with me.

Thank you again for taking the time to help review the orientation program.

Sincerely,

Shun Yanagishita

If you would like to address your question to the faculty advisor for this project, Jean Stockard, she can be reached at 541-346-5005 or [jeans@uoregon.edu](mailto:jeans@uoregon.edu). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon, (541) 346-2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study.

**SECOND RECRUITMENT EMAIL for in-depth interviews**

*(The Associate Director of Study Abroad Programs will send this email on my behalf and it will be sent to each student individually using the BCC function)*

Dear Student [first and last name],

I hope this email finds you doing well. A graduate student in the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management, Shun Yanagishita, is working on her exit project and is doing her research on students' perception of the effectiveness of the UO's general study abroad orientation program.

She would like to invite students to participate in an interview. The interview should take between 45 minutes to an hour. Every interview participant will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to the UO Duckstore. If you are interested in participating, please email Shun Yanagishita at: [shun@uoregon.edu](mailto:shun@uoregon.edu)

Participation for this interview is completely voluntary. If you decide to not participate, this will not affect your relationship with or services received from Study Abroad Programs.

Thank you,

Cari Vanderkar Moore

Associate Director for Study Abroad Programs

**APPENDIX B**

**Verbal and Written Consent/Script for Participation/Confidentiality/Tape Recording**

(What is written below will be verbally said to the participant and the participant will also have the opportunity to read it before signing this consent form)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an in-depth interview. Before I ask for your consent, I would like to describe the research project with you again.

This project is intended to help UO Study Abroad Programs analyze the effectiveness of their general study abroad orientation program. It will also be part of my exit project research for a Masters Degree in the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management. The study will compare NCSA/AHA students who studied abroad fall term 2007 and NCSA/AHA students who studied abroad winter 2008. The fall term 2007 students attended a “live” orientation and the winter 2008 students participated in an online orientation. Students will be asked various questions regarding their experiences with the general study abroad orientation process.

Your participation is important to us and so I would like to now go over some logistical information with you.

First, this interview is completely voluntary. You may stop at anytime and can choose to skip questions if you choose. Do you understand this?

Secondly, I would like to tape this interview for the sole purpose of data analysis. Do you mind? If so, I will take notes.

Thirdly, the information I will be asking for will be kept confidential. In the reports of the research I will never identify anyone by name and will disguise results so that individuals cannot be identified. In addition, anything you say will not affect your future relationships with our office (ie. Scholarship applications, future interest in study or intern abroad, applying for jobs in the office, references, etc.) If there are specific things you would like to be held in confidence please let me know at the time.

Lastly, I will need to have you sign a written consent form, down below. Please sign two copies, one will be for you to keep and the other one will be for me.

Do you have any questions or concerns? *(if they have any questions, answer them at this time)*

Thank you again for your participation. *(begin interview)*

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Please reread the information above and sign below:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the research being conducted, its procedure and have agreed to be interviewed.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have agreed to be tape recorded during the interview.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Interview Questions**

- 1) Have you studied or traveled abroad before? If so, when, where and for how long?
- 2) Describe your overall study abroad experience
- 3) Describe your housing situation
- 4) How was the site director experience?
- 5) What were the valuable aspects of the general study abroad orientation?
- 6) How did the general orientation affect your study abroad experience?
- 7) What were some things you wish you had been told in the general study abroad orientation?
- 8) What were the most enjoyable parts of the orientation?
- 9) Do you think you would have learned as much if the general orientation were web-based (for the fall students) or if it was face-to-face (for winter students)?
- 10) Do you think it is important to have general and program-specific orientations?
- 11) Any suggestions or comments for Study Abroad Programs about the general study abroad orientation process?

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Transcriptions

#### Classroom-based Participants

##### **Have you studied abroad or traveled abroad before? If so, when, where and for how long?**

No. The summer before, I had gone to France and that was the first time out of the country. It definitely got me excited cause I had gotten that little taste of Europe so I was really excited to go back. Two weeks, I think. I went with my sister's music trip.

No, I haven't studied abroad. I've traveled abroad before with my family to France and Lebanon. I was a little bit nervous. I was more nervous when I got there though than before cause I didn't know what to expect. I just didn't know what to expect and I was really anxious in a way but it was good.

I had studied abroad for one year. I left for an academic year. I had been abroad with family then did my exchange and then just recently studied abroad. I've been abroad in between but not back to my host country.

I didn't study abroad before, yeah it was the first time. I hadn't really traveled abroad I went to Canada and Mexico with my parents for a week. Nothing like that, that was the first time that I had ever traveled abroad was study abroad, by myself too. So it was a totally different experience.

I have never been outside of the country before. I've never studied abroad, never been abroad never done anything like that. So it was a big jump. I really wanted to jump into something and I wanted to test myself to see if I could do it cause I've never been out of the country and away from all my friends and everything that I had known.

Yeah, I am an international student here. I went to the U.S. when I was 15. I studied in the U.S. from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I graduated from high school in the U.S. and then came to the UO.

I haven't studied abroad. I had been abroad before, the summer after my senior year of high school. Not for school or anything it was through a program called Birth Right Israel. I went for ten days to Israel, it was actually with the UO, Stanford and some people from New York. That was the first time I went abroad.

No, my first time. I've been to Europe twice so it wasn't new to me. With my family. I had been to my host country before but not to my host city though.

##### **Describe your overall study abroad experience**

It was definitely worthwhile and I recommend it to anyone. It definitely broadened my ideas of the world and it opened me up to new things and experiencing life through a different lens helps you to be not so ethnocentric. Thinking about the world through the American eye. You can

really see it through a different perspective. But also, I have to say, it made me appreciate America more too. Cause there were things that I absolutely loved about my host country but there were things that I also felt like, wow, I miss that about home. The equality between the sexes, being a woman, being there I was actually quite surprised how unequal it was. I totally felt like I had a lower position than the men. That was weird because I never experienced that before. I've always felt on the same playing field. So things like that really taught me to appreciate things back home that I took for granted before going. Definitely a positive experience, I will definitely go back sometime in my life. It wasn't hard to come back. It was the perfect timing. I had a great time and I got to travel a little bit afterwards so I was ready to go back home. So when I got home it was fine. The hardest thing was the food. I definitely miss the food. It was really hard

It was really a life changing experience. I went through so many things, growing up as a person, being on my own and being able to take care of myself in a different country, speaking with different people and learning new perspectives so I learned a lot while I was there. It was really, really great. It was a very positive experience. It was hard to come back. Kind of a difference in lifestyle here so it was a little bit different coming back. But I got used to it again, after a couple months. I would love to go back, if I had the money. One day I'll go back. It went way over my expectations. I didn't know I was going to be so immersed going there so it was really quite an experience. It blew my expectations out of the water.

It made a huge difference to have professors from the UO campus teaching classes. It made it, especially the NW faculty, because they just made it so much more interesting and thrilling and it made me want to learn what they were teaching and overall it was incredible. It was so good. Of course I was prepared for culture shock where some students may have not been. Once, about a month in and you know the town that you are living in better it gets easier to be amongst host country nationals and know where you are going and feel safe. I felt like I was a part of the town when I was leaving. There were several locals that I had gotten to know. Less English speakers and just friendlier overall. The NW faculty emphasized the fact that it's not a touristy place. And so it helps when people are not sick of tourists and they just feel like they want to get to know you cause you're strange.

It was a really fun experience. I learned a whole lot about the host language and that was what I really wanted to do. That was my big goal. My main goal was to learn a whole lot of the host language and get to know the people around the town and stuff and just talk to people. I guess it was kinda mind-blowing. I guess if you can say that. I don't know if it's mind-blowing. It kinda sounds cheesy but just cause we went and traveled and we saw all those cool churches and all the monuments and stuff and I've never been in Europe before or anything like that and so it was really fun to just go in the trains. So it was just really interesting like everyday was like it's like when you're a kid or something because everything is so new, almost. Cause the culture is different and the way people act, the food, everything you know, not everybody. Like here where you have a car. Lots of differences like that. I miss my host city and country too, I really miss traveling around and going all over my host country. I think I'm going to get a bachelor's in my host language to teach English over there. I definitely want to get back there.

It was good, it was really eye-opening in many, many different ways. In my own life, how I view America, the language, oh my gosh, it was kaboom, the culture, the food, everything. Living with a whole different stranger family cause I had a host family and that's just something, I'm used to being independent and their culture so much not like that, it was crazy to just jump into that side and be living with people that you don't even know and trying to speak the different language and they didn't know English and it was great but in the beginning it's hard it was woo, what am I doing? You don't know anything about anything! And then you learn and then towards the end you assimilate and it's amazing and I didn't want to leave. I missed America and I wanted to go home but for a week and see my family and friends but then go back. I missed America so I did want to get home but I'm sad that I'm here now. But it was great, it was eye opening the program itself was amazing, I learned so much, I don't remember half of it of what I learned but I've learned so much when I was there about things. I wasn't necessarily studying, they were in English but they weren't literature courses that would count at least and so I didn't take them so I did painting and art stuff and I learned all about this art which is something I love but never studied. I wanna go back. It was hard but it was worth it and it challenges you and you have to step out of your, my comfort zone because I'm not a big travel person. Literally the traveling part, like the trains, that was crazy. It was fun. If I go back now I will be able to assimilate, so much easier. When I first was there, for the first two months, not freaking out, being overwhelmed and then by the third month I was gone. Right when I was thinking in my host country's language, I wish I could have stayed longer. I wish I was doing my host country's language as a major. Too late now, I should have stayed if I was going to stay, cause of the plane ticket. It was amazing.

I had so much fun there just because experiencing different culture is so much fun for me and it's totally different culture from my native country or the U.S. I did have fun there and meeting with people even with English speakers. I didn't have that much time to spend with people who are native speakers of my host country. But I had fun. It was a positive experience. It wasn't that hard to leave. Studying there and to be tourist there was different than I thought and maybe it would be more fun to be just a tourist. It was a positive experience for sure. I did have a homesick problem in the middle. I got used to living there and then I compared to how I live here or in my native country. It became better after a while.

When I first got there I hadn't researched how to get to my host family, really. Besides that, all the people in our group were great, there was six people in my class. It was a psychology class taught by a professor from Concordia University so it counted for credit here. There were only six students and I'm used to classes with 200. Having a study abroad experience with all my close friends and my roommate in the same class, we chose to take the same class, I didn't even know her before, I didn't know anybody before going. Everyone on the tour was really great. The only thing I would say that I didn't like so much was the interactions with actual local residents. Because our school was just for Americans. We lived with our host families who were host country locals but it was just the husband and wife and they didn't have any kids. It was a flat and it was about thirty minutes outside of my host city. Which was a good experience but totally different than if I were living in the city with other students or even local students from the university. Overall it was great, even with the host family. Overall it was a positive experience. I actually want to go back and do the whole back packing experience.

I sound like everyone else. The best thing ever and I wouldn't hesitate to do it again if I had the money. I made life-long friends. I was fortunate to not be living with all American students because a lot of people went home to their apartments at night with their other American friends and spoke English but since we lived with locals we had the chance to be immersed in it more. I felt lucky about that. Overall very positive. It was hard to leave because I had so much fun because I also felt comfortable but it was also non-parallel with my major and I felt like I was getting behind and so I knew I had to come back and finish school. But if I had the money or the time, I would have definitely stayed. I was a bit unsure for the first week or so coming back. I was so unhappy to be back in the United States. I was stuck in a U.S. airport for a long time too, a 35 hour trip and coming back to the customs and understanding everything was crazy. I was pretty unhappy but luckily it was Christmas break and I had a lot of things going on.

### **Describe your housing situation**

I lived in an apartment with three other girls from my program. There weren't any locals living with us. It worked out really nicely. They were all really nice. We bonded really well and it was actually something where towards the beginning we didn't do much together but towards the end they were like my family. So that was great. I lucked out and had a good group I was living with. The only downside was that I was the only one who had experience with the language. And they were all first year students and some people were living with American and locals and so the ones who spoke more of the host country's language could practice with the local roommates. And for me, I didn't progress really far with the host language just because when I came home to my apartment we spoke in English. Even if they wanted to practice, they just really couldn't because they didn't know a lot of conversational words in the host language. It wasn't that big of a motivational drive for them to practice it all the time. That was the only downside but it was a really minor one because I had so much fun with them.

I had a roommate that went to the UO and there were local students staying there as well and we had a kitchen downstairs. It was a pretty big dorm. I had my own bathroom and shower, our own room had a bathroom, we didn't have to share with anyone else. There were some U.S. and some local students in the dorm. The housing was an okay situation. I lived in the dorms in Eugene so it wasn't new to me.

I lived in an apartment with another American student. A student from another U.S. school. It was interesting, to say the least, we got along great so it worked out perfectly but it was a nice situation. We had a nice apartment and it was good. My roommate was in the host country for the first time, and was abroad for the first time. For the first part of the term I did my own thing. I didn't really hang out with him per se just because I knew that he wasn't accustomed to being abroad and I have a thing about feeling like I fit in, or maybe blend in, more so. I didn't even wear a UO shirt the whole time we were there because I didn't feel like sticking out.

I lived in an apartment with other locals and they were all mostly graduate students. It was a higher end dorm for locals with good grades or something like that. They were in their mid-20's to late-20s. It was fun living with them because there were five American guys that lived there and we had one section of the building and there was a common kitchen area that I'd go down to a lot and cook food there and I'd talk to them and stuff and lot of them would hang out for hours



and it was strange because when do they do their homework? They were just kinda of relaxed. It was really fun.

It was good. It was a mom and her husband had died and it was her son but her son was studying in another city. But their semesters are weird so he was home sometimes and then he would leave to go study and then he would come back. He was really nice and cool. Mostly it was the mom and the old aunt. They are family oriented and they care for the older generation when they get old and they're not able to care for themselves. You gotta step in. They were really cute, the old aunt wanted to do everything and I was like no, let me help you, you're 94. But that's just like her generation, like the culture, like everything and it was kinda hard but I felt like I lived there but it wasn't like I really lived there since I felt like a guest. Towards the end it was a lot better but since I'm just really independent so that the whole living with other people that I don't know, that was a big world, like what? Towards the end it was okay. I felt more a part of it all. That was one of the hardest parts cause I didn't know where the lines were and I didn't want to cross them and so I wouldn't go there and so it was stupidly drawn out. But it was fine in the end and they were really good people and it was a really good experience. They have like four homestays, or six, just a few and the rest are apartments with American students and a few with Italian students. I didn't think I would get it though because they said no one gets it but I got it. I would never take it back. My family, the best family I could have lived with. It was perfect.

I lived with three local girls and two American girls from the same program. Six people in one apartment. Pretty chaotic but I got used to it. Living situation wasn't that bad for me. Some people told me that their apartment wasn't that great or they had a bug problem but I didn't have any problem. There were five bedrooms and two beds in one room, so I shared with other girl from the same program, a UO student. It's different culture I guess, but roommates that were locals smokes a lot in the house. It was hard for me and two other American students. Other than that, not too bad.

They had kids that were grown. A few times, my host mom's son came for dinner. We met them a few times. My host dad's daughter, they weren't married but they were married previously and had separate children. So we got to meet my host dad's daughters. But they weren't over too much because they lived in other places. It was pretty good, but I'm so used to being here for four years living on my own and not having "parents" so going back to living in a house with rules and we all shared one bathroom in this really tiny space. It was okay I wouldn't say it was the best thing that I could have done while I was there but it was good. It could have been worse I guess. We had separate rooms because I had chosen to request that. Everyone else on our program shared the same size room we had but with two beds which was tiny. Like a dorm sized room. My housemate goes to OSU, we live pretty close. We all got a long really well, the group was great, the only thing is we were all Americans. I think one of the main points of going to another country is meeting a lot of people who are actually from that country. We did, the first month we were there and then they all went to uni, they went to universities in another city and so we never saw them again, it was too far away to go, we could have but we didn't make time for it. So there weren't too many students in the area where we lived.

I was sixteen minutes walking distance from school and pretty much anything I needed was there. I was lucky that the housing was in the city walls so some people had longer commutes. The locals that I lived with were in college and most of them were studying law. My friend from the UO and I shared the room. It's really common not to have a living room, so all we had for a common space was the kitchen. Four local roommates and a person from Japan. I really lucked out. My roommate was great. We were literally together 24 hours a day. She was great.

### **How was the site director experience?**

He's fantastic. I don't think anyone has anything negative to say about him. He is everything you want in a program director. He's very kind and knowledgeable and he has stories about everything and he just really has a good heart. He cares about all the students, he really wants you to have a good time, he has a good sense of humor about things. But if you need help with something serious he'll be there and he's a very good caregiver. He's just wonderful. He really made it what it was, the whole program owes a lot to his leadership. It would have been different if he wasn't on the program. Yeah, it definitely helped a lot having a site director, cause he knows the area so well, he just knows things.

He was a great teacher, person, friend. He knew so much about the host country. Any question we had, he seemed to have the answer. He was always caring, checked up on us and very helpful with everything. Very intelligent man and so it was good having him lead us. I think I would have been a little less informed definitely because without speaking the language, getting around would have been much harder. So it was good to have him there.

He was great. He showed us all the ins and outs of the town and on all the excursions that we went on throughout the term we visited several different places and they were all tied into our classes and he was very knowledgeable about everything, almost everything. You can't be knowledgeable about everything but he was great. Really great guy.

He was really nice. He is a funny guy and he likes to talk a lot. He knows a lot about Oregon. He was actually here for a year in high school. When he was in high school he did an exchange program and he was in Portland for a year. So he knows a lot about Oregon, he knew the coast and stuff, Silver Creek Falls that was really fun. He was really helpful and helped all the students. He was a really, really good director.

He was great and he helped us a lot. His wife helped with the living situation. Whenever we didn't have enough pots for cooking or anything, she got it immediately after we asked her and she was always willing to help us. When we go to excursions every weekend, we learned a lot about the host culture and art history. If there was no site director it would be difficult, without having someone who can actually speak English. I think my host country language improved.

He knew so much about the city, all about it really. We would go on day trips and he just could point out everything. He'd been there a thousand times. It was really great to have a personal tour guide actually on our trip with us. He was also great, he invited us over for a festival. We went to go watch a bunch of fireworks at the park right by his house. He was really humble and always inviting. It was nice to have somebody who knew a lot about the host city and was from

the city in our school because a lot of our teachers were from Oregon. But the site director and also the other lady were locals.

The two site directors were wonderful. They really took care of us and they were so nice and accommodating. I got sick from traveling from traveling to another country and so I was not feeling well a couple of the weeks in the term. They wrote me recommendations for doctors and took me herself to the pharmacy and talked to them for me. I could have gotten a long fine but she really wanted to help me. Our language professor was the best ever. I had only five people in my class so that was the most positive class that I had. I didn't like art history before I left and we had a really great guy and I really appreciated the program. It would be different without the site director. Especially because we took so many excursions together and one of them was usually with us. It was nice to know that someone had done to it before. Especially because we paid so much to be there so I would have been really upset if it wasn't good and rewarding. Everything went really smooth.

### **How was the NW faculty experience?**

They were both wonderful. They were definitely the hardest professors. The classes they taught were really hard. That was probably one of the negatives in a weird way. It was good because I learned a lot but people had told me that when you go study abroad the classes are really not a big deal because you are there for the experience and not to be bogged down with the homework. Their classes were surprisingly challenging. I'm pretty sure I worked harder in those classes than I have done in my classes back here. They were really great, they love the host country and so they have a lot of great stories and they were really great at getting us involved in things. They were really great at pushing us to go out and do things and one really cool thing, once a week they would have a dinner and they would have a sign-up sheet. They would cook you dinner. One of the faculty members was a great cook so he would teach you the recipe so that you could cook it for your roommates. From their house, they had neighbors who would come over and bring them cheese and stuff from their goats and so they would always be sharing them with us.

That was great. I'm friends with one of the faculty members. I had a great time and she helped out to. It's nice to have her perspective of Eugene and the host country, combined the experiences to help us along. They would cook dinner for us, once a week, we'd go to her place. I had a good time with that. I email her every once in a while. She's my advisor for my classes. She helps me out.

It was helpful. She was giving us a lot of help and before going to the program and orientation, I went to ask her how the host city is. That was nice to have her, it would be different with somebody not from the UO.

From OSU. She taught a history course. She came on some of our longer excursions as well as some of our shorter ones. She was great she invited us over for American dinners. She made chili and cornbread. She had a really big apartment all to herself. Her husband came for the first half and then left and she was lonely and so she had us over to hang out. She was pretty nice. She taught two different levels. I guess she graded differently for each course. I didn't take her class so I don't know.

It was nice because he was sharing a lot of the experiences we were, like adapting to culture and always wanting to experience things in the host city, rather than the English teacher who taught there, I didn't take the class but, she had lived in the host city her whole life and was not new to anything but both ways it was good to have teachers from the host country and not from the host country.

### **What were the valuable aspects of the general study abroad orientation?**

It was fun to see everyone that was going to study abroad and everyone had pretty good energy there and that was nice. The information I learned, it was good although it was pretty similar to what they sent use in the packets ahead of time. The things that were valuable were the stories. In the packets (from AHA) they sent us before hand they didn't give many personal examples. I just remember more stories being shared and the stories made a much larger impact. They were talking about being careful dating in different cultures. The way you interact with certain people can be misconstrued. I liked that there was food.

It gave us an idea of what we were to expect. Housing, the people, arrangements. It was a good experience. I think the general orientation wasn't quite, it didn't have that much of an impact on me. But the group presentation for my program, that was really good because it gave me an inside into what to expect, like the city I was going to.

It gave a certain a dynamic to the UO Study Abroad Programs. Being in the EMU ballroom and seeing thousands of students or hundreds of students I don't know how many exactly but four hundred, five hundred just tons of students going abroad it's an incredible achievement. It's nice to put perspective on that cause we're representing the UO all around the world. It was exciting, it makes me feel like I'm not alone in the big process. I think that for me at least, those little workshops, like cultural adjustment, gender issues, I had already known about those before going to the host country so I didn't really find those too extremely useful. However people who haven't been abroad before and don't know what to expect I think that it definitely helps. I think it gets beaten into your head by the end of your stay there and that yet these issues are there and you have to be aware of them.

It gives you ideas, problems that people face when studying abroad or the issues that are involved. Or how another country will be different to get yourself prepared for differences that you will encounter in different countries, like housing, especially because a lot of people go to another country with their values from the U.S. society and it's a lot different and they learn their problems that way. It pretty much emphasized not to get drunk because that is the high time when people get into trouble, is when they drink. That was emphasized in the orientation. Some of it I think was helpful. It was nice to get all that paperwork so you can look over it. I remember we got a bunch of sheets for housing and things not to do and stuff. So that was nice. That was a nice part of it. There was a couple of things with like housing how might they react or how might something you see as a reaction of their family members it might just be that they aren't really mad and it may just seem like they are mad at you or just cultural differences. Just to know that things aren't always as they appear to you or seem to you.

I liked the workshops. I thought those were good cause you got to meet people that were studying abroad, first off and that's always cool cause then you're like these are other people that

are doing the same things that I'm doing and sharing the experience almost. And you're able to discuss with people that have already gone like I think they had people I think there was one girl that went to Japan and lived there a year and she was leading and I don't remember exactly which one it was, and that was when I thought that I wasn't going to get homesick, I was always thinking about the apartment part of it, not like the homestay part of it. It was housing. That was really cool to hear her experience. And I think a lot of the ones where you get to hear people that went, their experiences and what they dealt with is definitely more valuable than the more generic hey, this is what you expect. It's going to be different. Yes, you can say what you are going to expect but it's not going to be your experience most likely. Everyone is going to bring something different to the table. It's going to be dealing with something differently. And having a harder time with certain things, other things and not some other things. The health and security/safety, I don't think about in those terms. Going to my host country, I didn't think of getting robbed. I was thinking about the food I was going to eat and the places I was going to see. And that was really good that they brought that to the forefront. And actually the house stuff was too. No one thinks they are going to get sick when they're studying abroad nobody wants to deal with that. I actually had a friend who got sick and had to go to the doctor and she didn't know and she was actually misdiagnosed of it in my host country. So those parts were definitely valuable. I liked that a lot. I forgot about those, yeah. It's good, it's always good to bring that up. Because when you're studying abroad when you're thinking about it in May, before it's right there, when it's right there you get really scared, but before it's there you're just excited and you're like it's happening and you can't believe it may be but you start thinking and assimilating culture stuff that you can over here and getting all that stuff together but you do think about the safety and like I didn't at least and maybe it's just me. So that was good that they brought to the forefront and you were forced to think about it. This might be like what might happen ya know. I can't remember the second workshop for the life of me. It might have been gender. I remember that the housing one was in the side room across the ballroom. I don't know. I remember it being long. You feel like you are being lectured, conduct. I can't remember the specifics. I remember there were a whole lot of slides and I remember that older lady I think she was talking about health and stuff, she was funny, really funny. That was well done I thought. It appealed in a way but also brought up issues that can come up but in a way that we can deal with it and not being like oh my gosh it's our mom being like don't have sex. She did really well with that. That was good.

I think I went to the cross-cultural one. And maybe gender, I'm not sure. I think just for me it wasn't the first time listening about it, the culture shock, and how it will be different living with host family that was helpful information. Beginning part was valuable too but it could be more helpful if it was more specific about problems. Examples they had was too exaggerated. I remember this girl how she lived in Japan with her host parents and how culture is different. It could be something more small like that. I don't know. It's hard to imagine something too big. I can't really think of myself encountering that big problem. It would be more helpful to think about myself being in the situation.

Personally I didn't even think anything was valuable from it. I went to the housing one and I was with students who were going to all these different countries and it's so different from everybody that I think the general orientation really didn't help at all. Because they were talking about so many different countries cause health is different in every single country and the shots

required and everything. The housing you can live with host families, in the dorms, you can live in an apartment by yourself, you can live with other students, there are so many different options and so they try to tell you all these options and you already knew what you were doing. So to hear the other options like well I don't have a choice really cause I'm already doing host families so to hear about living in a dorms or sharing baths and rooms or something like that or sharing public baths, that didn't apply to me. So I thought it was a waste of time. It was interesting to learn about but from the orientation perspective it really didn't orient me for anything in my host city except for what I already knew from the orientation for my program. The one I'm talking about is the big one for everybody and then we had our specific one. The specific one was geared towards what we were actually going to do. I didn't think the large orientation was helpful at all.

During it I was thinking it was not helpful because we were talking about the rest of the world and nothing applies to just your country. We were talking about housing and one point that was helpful that made me decide not to live with a host family was talking to somebody about a host family and so that was what made me realize that it wasn't the right option for me. We went through scenarios that really would not have applied to my program. It was more about developing countries. The workshops were pretty big but that's okay. Gender was good. They taught us about nonverbal ways to express your feelings. That was good. That's all I remember.

#### **How did the general orientation affect your study abroad experience?**

The stuff they told us about preparing yourself for cultural differences. They talked about the phases of culture shock. That helped a lot because you could see yourself going through the stages when you were there. It was nice that we had been taught about them ahead of time so that we could recognize it and realize that it's natural, normal, just let it progress naturally.

To be honest, not really. Not really. When I was going through the emotions I was just focused on that and I didn't really think about the general orientation at all.

It's good to do that in any university setting. It helped get to know the professor at least the professors I was going abroad with. What to expect in a university setting in a campus in a foreign city cause it's not the same as the UO. The buildings are spread out all over the city at least in my host city there are whereas we have one campus here. It didn't really affect me too much but I think it's useful and necessary. And in what ways it was useful...sorry...I think it would have stuck out more in my mind if I hadn't been abroad before. It was kind of like a recap for me. I think you are definitely going to get a different answer from somebody that hasn't been abroad that went to that orientation.

I just had some preconceived notions of what it would be like before more. And I kinda picked out some of the people that had the problems and that they could possibly have some problems studying abroad, just because they would be drinking or something. I guess their attitudes towards studying abroad didn't really change their behavior like towards the host country culture. They stuck out, obviously we all stuck out but they were obnoxious at times. The first couple of days we went out and stuff and some people would drink too much and it was ridiculous like how it is around the UO. And some people do that abroad and you feel embarrassed because you probably look so stupid. But then I noticed that even locals did it and

got drunk and stuff. Some of the things that they tell you in the orientation aren't always true and that there's exceptions to it.

I think it's beneficial because it helps you prepare better for studying abroad. Gets you to think about what it's going to be like in your host family or dorm or apartment with locals. So in that sense it's really good because it goes over something you may not have thought of without an orientation process.

I think it helped, cause it brought up stuff that I hadn't necessarily thought about before but then when I actually left, I had forgotten all of it, literally all of it when I left for my program because of the time lapse. I don't know if you guys can do anything different about that because it's fall term and you have to do it in spring and maybe the online thing that would help and that you could do it closer to when you leave but I guess it helps in that you start thinking about those issues long time before, you start making plans, start getting in the mode, you start your thinking process, start thinking about where you're gonna stay because you just get excited about going abroad after it and you want to plan everything you wanna know everything and that's good to do before in May but at the same time, the bigger issues, the things that were supposed to be more helpful to the actual experience weren't prevalent in my mind when I left. So that's something, the time lapse. More than that, like I said, it was definitely helpful in the planning and in getting the exciting sense. But for the immediate sense, I don't know.

Just having the orientation makes me feel like just going there and experiencing all that. It was encouraging me. And seeing how you might have some problems or good time, all those things made me think about it. Without going to orientation I can't really see myself jumping into the culture. Meeting with people who are actually going to the program makes me feel a little more comfortable.

It didn't really affect my study abroad experience, it just kinda prepared me for it I guess. But I already knew a lot of the things from hearing it from other students which I think is the best way before going to deal with it. We had a package from AHA with student responses to what to bring, how to communicate things like that and that's way more helpful than hearing from the general orientation perspective where they're like they tell you this is what normally happens but you don't know that unless you talk to a student, they're like don't listen to that do this and that's a lot more helpful. You hear from other students other than just the general speaker of orientation.

It was helpful. The only thing that I really remember that really helped me during my experience was the little graph of what's going to happen to your feelings probably. The emotional high, sad and then everything will then level out. My friend and I traveled before the program started and so we went through the whole thing. We were happy, we both got upset, depressed, and then we realized that was the thing they were talking about. So when we arrived our host country we were fine but then we saw our friends arrive and do it in front of us so we told them that they would be fine. The program specific-orientation was helpful other than the fact that the woman who was running it hadn't been there. I happened to have a friend who had gone on the program and I met with her and that was a lot more helpful. The person who was supposed to come to our site-specific orientation, the student, didn't show up. That was disappointing because it would

have been really beneficial. The people in the study abroad office can't tell you as much as a student.

**What were some things you wish you had been told in the general study abroad orientation?**

I wouldn't have minded more information on how to get around Europe. You just kinda figure it out after trial and error what works and what doesn't. But they covered a lot about adjusting yourself culturally, food and customs. The only thing I didn't know a whole lot going was how to get around. You do that a lot on weekends if you have the time and you want to go to another city. It wouldn't take very long but you could go over helpful tips on transportation.

The orientation, it didn't seem like too much of an impact. So going into it I didn't really know what to expect or what I should know. I don't see how they could have covered everything. You just have to go yourself and experience it and go through emotions. I think they did an overall good job.

I don't think there was any. It was very well covered that we were just gonna be in a setting with no real help. Well you have a site director there to help you with everything but in a foreign setting it's completely different. They told us that was what's going to happen and that was what happened. So I guess it was informative on that level.

I'm trying to separate the general and the program-specific. I don't remember specifically anything in particular. I just remember there were some things that held true and some things that didn't that I was told at the orientation. Some of the things didn't apply to me because at the apartments we didn't have any issues with bringing people over comparison to what they said. It wasn't that big of a deal but anyways we didn't really bring people over that much. One other American guy would bring people over and have dinner in the kitchen and I would do that sometimes too and there were no issues there. So other people had issues with families, when you live with families they had a lot of issues. My friend lived with a grandma and she had a daughter and kid also and they had problems with the finances because she wouldn't let him pay for any of the food and stuff and it was an issue for them, that because now that you are family so you don't have to pay for any of this when considered family. It's different for us because we want to pay evenly for food that's how we are raised here. So that's a big difference. I think living with families especially there are issues also with apartments. A lot of people had issues when they lived with locals in apartments just having a lack of communication or some things were lost in translation I guess. Or just like the notions that we have in the U.S. compared to the host country and how you live with people and stuff. Problems with cleaning, there's always problems with cleaning.

Political things. You know what would be really cool is if you separated us out into countries, everyone going to Italy, everyone going to Spain and then talking about the culture more. Cause you get that in your language classes and you get a lot of it and probably more than you could ever want and that's really cool and it helps, it's obviously different when you go there cause they're talking about the host country in general and you go to the specifics like the regions, with the food and you learn about that but not specifically, I just felt like I didn't know enough about exactly where I was going. But I feel like, especially the people who don't have the language,



learning more about the culture would really be helpful for them. I want more experience stuff. I love that. People who had gone before. I know this is hard because people are living their lives and people don't want to come back but getting someone who went on the program and having them share their experience and I don't know if that's possible. Maybe more, I liked the general thing it was good, the political thing I would add to the general thing but I think it would kinda be cool if we did more specific stuff, like that, but in a country sense because I know we do the specific programs. Also you can make friends and you can visit and create networks with people throughout the country when you want to travel around or give them suggestions. I also really like the small workshops I don't want that to go away either. That would be a good replacement but it could be hard. You could do another day or that would be hard to do because people get weird because of schedules to. But it could be a country's day and break it up to each country and people that are really wanting to know about it could come.

Just the packet I got about my program was helpful. I think the program-specific is more helpful. Because for me, there was the NW faculty member who really knows about my host city who knows the site director and so that was helpful information.

Yeah, actually I know this is addressed in the program-specific orientation but definitely know how to get to where you're going when you get there. That was never addressed at the general, it was just where you were going to stay. But maybe modes of transportation to get there, how to coordinate with other students to maybe take a taxi together. That was all introduced in the program-specific but if they are going to continue having a general orientation which I'm sure they will because of health reasons or whatever, to address transportation and maybe saying from other students that taking the public transportation isn't the best way to get to where you are going and to spend the extra money to take the taxi. Just anything, along the lines of know where you are going before you get on the plane. Cause a lot of students had problems with that. They didn't know. We had our host family's phone numbers but a lot of the people in the host families weren't willing to pick you up at the airport cause they easily live an hour and a half away. The host families weren't really like your parents.

It's not their fault, the Euro got strong. The time we went it was the first time the host language wasn't going to be taught at the University. We didn't know our schedule or which weekends we were going to be free. It would have been nice to have a skeletal outline of the program and being more clear of what our education was going to be like. We weren't with locals and that was kind of disappointing especially for us when we were in third year.

### **What were the most enjoyable parts of the orientation?**

I got to meet a lot of people in my group. This would be more specific in your group-specific orientation but I did hang out throughout the general orientation with a couple people from my group and then by getting to know them that way, we were able to plan to fly over there together because they talked about how travel buddy's are really good to go with. That helps a lot because I didn't really know anyone in my group before I went and so it was nice to meet some people by face so I could recognize and get that sorted out. We didn't really get to know each other in the program-specific orientation but in the general you get to know people, by mingling and you get to talk to them during breaks.

Just talking to people and seeing where they were going and what they were doing were interesting. All over the world, some places that I had never heard of.

I enjoyed being in the ballroom with everybody. I really felt like there were just tons of people sharing the same experience. All excited about the same thing and that's fun when that happens. I think that the little workshops kind of break everybody apart and so you get into smaller groups and meet other people that are actually going to different countries and in that aspect that was enjoyable to be able to meet other students. It helps when there are facilitators in those workshops that have been abroad that have gone through the same things we are going to go through or we have gone through and so that is a good aspect to that because it's always important to have people that know what they are talking about.

The free food and the coffee, that was pretty nice. Listening to the people speak. Some directors spoke, people with past experience. That was interesting listening to them. Also just to see the people that you would be studying abroad with and meet them and also just see what the major programs were. The most popular programs like Italy, France, Spain are really popular and also other people go to Africa and it's interesting. We go to Europe and if you think about comparing to going to Africa or somewhere it's a way totally different culture because we have ties to Europe. I think it would be fun to go to other countries. I also saw other cultures too and that was really fun too and made me want to and I realized that there are so many others cultures and that everywhere you go it's different. So that made me really want to go outside of Europe, maybe go to South America would be interesting. If I ever get the chance, that would be cool.

The workshops, the discussions, people's experiences. Was there food? Don't do pizza go with sandwiches next time.

Listening to people who actually went on a study abroad program before and who have experienced all the different cultural experiences. That was useful.

Meeting other students was kinda cool but I mean I didn't get to travel with them. So it was actually kinda more worse than better I guess cause you met all these students that are really cool but we're like I guess I never get to see you again. They were going to Spain or different countries. It was nice but the program-specific was so much better because you actually got to meet the people you were actually going with. We went to the housing one, they had all the students do projects in the separate classrooms at the orientation. There was five different students going to different countries sitting in my table talking about housing but we all had different housings so it was kinda hard to compare. It didn't seem like it was really worth my time being at the general because I didn't really take much out of it. The program-specific one, they tell you specific things for your program that you're actually doing rather than the general, everybody doing different things.

Was to see all the other students that were going abroad and seeing my friends and knowing where they were going and getting all excited together. I don't think the orientation was beneficial for me because I had been abroad. I think it would have been more beneficial to people who had never been abroad and so it's totally understandable and I think everyone should do it but it wasn't eye-opening.

**Do you think you would have learned as much if the general orientation were web-based instead of classroom-based?**

I would probably have picked Blackboard especially if you include videos. What I like about the live orientation is getting to hear stories and hearing information from an actual person who you can hear the excitement in their voice when they are telling you about these things so it gets you more energized and excited about it and reading it. But if they added in a couple videos into Bb, you still get the personal telling of information plus the regular information. That sounds good to me. I would probably prefer that. I know most students would prefer that too, it's just easier. Students prefer that [Blackboard] just because, first of all, the live was on a Saturday and people don't like to give up a weekend day, it's three hours in the middle of the day, an inconvenient time. A lot of people feel like it's a waste of their time I'm sure. With Blackboard, with an online thing, you can take it at your own pace too, so that the people who do care more about it and do want the information and want to really soak it in can take it at a slower pace. And for the people that want to figure it out when they get there can breeze through it if they want. It's a digital age, it's just easier. Texting age. It's easier, people like it. For Blackboard I think it has to be done in the future. I think it's a trend.

I think web-based would be just as insightful as the orientation and maybe even more because you can go back and check on it and read it again and keep it fresh in your head. So I think the web-based would be the best way to do it. If I could choose, I would do web-based. I could take it on my own pace and check it over again. I can look it over. Yeah, I'm not the most internet savvy, but I can, internet does have great information. I can see that being very helpful. If you have a question you can look it up in the chapters. Besides there were too many people at the orientation so it wasn't on a personal level. I can see the web-based being more useful. I think it just depends on the person but for me, I have a hard time sitting for three hours. It would be a personal thing. But maybe web-based since you can take it on your own pace and at times you do want to read.

Uhm, probably not, I think it's different when you talk to someone one-on-one. The internet is so vast now. You can read something and then just either file it or you know, forget it completely. So I think the human contact, I guess you could say is more important in putting that in someone's head I think. It really makes a difference when you get to see how many people are actually going to go abroad that same term that you are. So it's nice when everyone can be together doing the same thing. It's convenient to be able to do it anytime, the online. But I just think it's nice to have a big group of people together. I would say go with the "live" orientation. You can always have part of it online but do part of it as a big group too.

I prefer more personal encounters or where you go and you actually see people and you see actual orientation advisors and go to meetings and stuff and talking to people on a personal level I think it's a lot better and you pick up a lot more than if you just read information on the internet and take quizzes. I think you pick up a lot more if you went to the orientation process I went too. I have Facebook and stuff but I'm not a big fan of it. I think there's a lot of problems with it because when you meet someone and you look them up on Facebook and you look up what movies they like. You can look at random people and their profiles. I don't use internet a whole lot as probably more people my age. There are good things because through those networks you can meet people and meet people that went to your high school or when you were younger.

Internet is closed off and you don't get a broader perspective as where in an orientation process you get to talk to people and do group activities and stuff. I don't really mind too much of how it's flexible. It's just a three-hour thing and you go there and get it all done at once. You can pick up a lot more and more if you have an imagery of the orientation because you can tie that with what people said than online which is text and videos you don't really have much of a connection or understanding of it.

I never go on Facebook, which is weird for a college student. I love personable aspects of life and it saddens me that the world is becoming so separated with the internet and not face-to-face. And I feel like you lose a lot without personal interaction and it would have been more convenient, which is nice, if it was online probably. Cause I'm guessing that you can do it whenever, and that's always nice and convenience is a big part of it. But there's less of a community and less of a personal, I guess it's too... and thinking about like European cultures and it's so community based, it's family based, it's community based and you get into that mind set, if you're doing this online and getting on the computer by yourself, isolated in your little room, you're not interacting, also cause when you go abroad you are going to meet people randomly, you have no choice. I had to kinda do that. You have to throw yourself out there. I'm all about a person saying face-to-face and I hate online stuff, I love it but I check email but other than that I don't, it's not a big deal you don't need a computer all the time. There's so much, too much. You can watch a video about somebody's experience but you can't go talk to them personally about it. When you talk to someone, a conversation can go ways you never anticipated before. And you can learn so many things that aren't by the book. That's the whole talking to people about individual experiences, you learn so much. And you get to ask questions, a big part of it, and I'm sure you can do online question things maybe you guys do that. But you can sit there and ask, maybe there was a question that you had never thought to ask and your neighbor asked it and you just learned that. If I was in a room all by myself I would not have thought asked that question or would have learned that. The community, the personable and being able to learn more about specific things because you're talking to people and conversations go in ways you never anticipated. So, I don't like it. But if it works, it works, whatever, figure it out, and get it together, it's fine. Convenience is a big deal and that's like the world today. Whatever, I don't really care but I care at the same time. It's still worth coming in on a Saturday. And if you're not willing to sacrifice three hours of your day then maybe you shouldn't be studying abroad. Come on... The free condoms were tight. It was cool. I do remember it being long. But I don't know if it was just like long-winded or the one where the lady talked, about the health stuff was funny so that one was fine. So your speakers are not bad per se but that was something I remember thinking, that this is going to go on forever. So maybe spice it up, get more to the point. Do the general, general stuff online and do the workshops in person. Maybe you can incorporate both. But overall it was a good deal. Saturday isn't necessarily the best but at the same time, school days are impossible, maybe like a night-time weekday could be good but at the same time people work but then people work on Saturday. Especially during spring term people don't want to give up their Saturdays for stuff especially if it's nice out. But I just feel like that's the best in the time, three hours and Saturday is a good time to do that. And that there's no way to avoid people missing it because of jobs and such and daytime wouldn't work at all because of school. It was kinda annoying but it as okay. When you're going abroad you sacrifice some stuff.

I would prefer face-to-face. Cause actually seeing people from same program and other programs. Online doesn't really help. I've never experienced online orientation but listening to people in front of you encourages you more and you feel more enjoyable. I'm not internet savvy and maybe that's the reason why I like live better. If I could do it again, I would say live. Face-to-face seems like a more commitment for myself than just doing it online. It's flexible but it doesn't seem like you are into the program. It's more less like a strong commitment. Some people like to do it online and not feel comfortable doing face-to-face.

I think it would be harder to get students to do the online thing rather than coming and just sitting and listening cause I guess then you can choose to listen or not. But if they are really geared to students paying a lot of attention to the orientation, I would say that the online thing is better because you actually have to read it and answer questions. I think I would rather just go to an orientation and listen to people talk, cause then you can ask questions if you have them, cause a lot of people ask questions and you can't really do that online unless you email. Online would be a good way cause you can do it on your own time say if you can't make it on a Saturday you don't really have the excuse, "oh I couldn't come." But I'm not sure if they should just cancel the general orientation and make it just all online Blackboard maybe just for people who can't make the orientation to do the online blackboard. I haven't seen the Blackboard so. It's kinda nice having everything online though for convenience. But like I said I didn't really take that much out of the general orientation that I can't really say either or cause I could be fine with none of it or just program-specific. I'm on the internet a lot. Unless they do something on the Blackboard site that was like an iChat where you could talk to a "live" student. I would rather do that, I think talking to students who've done it before is so much better than going to an orientation because you learn what people actually have done rather than the general layout of the programs. I think students should be able to choose which they want to do. If they'd rather know just the general things about study abroad then talk to someone about that but if you want to know about your program then talk to somebody that went on your program. Cause it's a lot easier knowing what people have done in the past to decide what you want to do there, about anything really about studying abroad. Just the question and answer and so if you could incorporate something into the Blackboard site like a live chat or email just in case somebody has a question. In the orientation you raise your hand after a question and it's answered right away. Having the flexibility is what students want. If you have to be out of town or if somebody has to miss the orientation for whatever reason.

I think it's better to have the personal connection of a "live" orientation to know whose all behind it and organizing things and we saw study abroad representatives. I think it would be strange to do it just through the computer and then go abroad. It's really good to know the people behind it, it just seems weird not to see them. For me, the sequence of going to orientation, reading through the materials, I really like having that structure of someone else presenting it to me but I think it would have also worked if I had been in the winter and so I wouldn't know what I was miss. I don't think they would be at a detriment. But like I said, I really like to see whose behind it. If I could do it again, I would do the web-thing because I wouldn't want to dedicate my Saturday to it, coming to campus. I think the online is definitely an up-to-date option. And I don't think the questions that were asked in the live one from the group were so beneficial that you had to be there to hear them. I don't think you would have

missed out on that because there are good resources here and you could always come talk to somebody here if you had any questions. I think it would be a good supplement.

**Do you think it is important to have general and program-specific orientations?**

If the general is Blackboard that's fine, but for the program-specific I think it's important to have the in-person group meeting, just because they are the people you're going to be going abroad with. It is good for just like pre-bonding time just to see who you are going with. The questions are different at the program-specific, you get to talk to someone from your specific city and ask really specific questions. I definitely think it's important to have both. But if the general one is a faster thing that's just online because I think any questions that were answered through blackboard in the general orientation is stuff you may ask anyway at the program-specific one.

I think the general can be put online but the specific orientation would be helpful having it live. I liked that, it was good. It was focused on my host city and we could see where we were going and learned what to expect.

Cutting down the time of the general orientation. I remember it was three hours. I think having everybody together in the big ballroom and then doing program specific after that maybe instead of doing the different workshops cause I think that those could be talked about in the program-specifics.

I think doing both, general and program-specific is good. It's a big study abroad program and so it makes it more interesting because some people are going to Chile, Italy and just overview of people going to study abroad and doing program-specific is more, could be more like a questions section and the general one could be an overview for study abroad issues.

Just say program-specific because you could incorporate things from the general into the program-specific that need to be said. Just have it [online] for people who can't make the general orientation, able to do the Blackboard.

Unless you were to incorporate country-specific options about, like if I had known about gender roles in my host country that would have been sufficient for me or housing in my host country. But if that's too much to do for every country and if it's easier to do a general orientation for the office then that would make sense but I wouldn't have minded just doing it all at once.

**Any suggestions or comments for Study Abroad Programs about the general study abroad orientation process?**

If they do decide to keep it with Bb, moving in that direction I think that's fine. I was really, really, well prepared. They answered a lot of good questions. I think that it's important to keep the program-specific orientation separate and in-person that'll be my suggestion. They did a really good job. I don't have a lot of critiques. You do get a lot of information thrown at you when you're just excited to go and you just say all right, yes, yes to everything they are talking about when you may really not be processing all of it. But it is all good information. They did a good job.

Creating questionnaires, asking students questions to get them thinking of what they have to go through. A question would be like, "How well do you travel with public transportation? Very good, not good, etc." And then give them feedback by saying in this country you are going to use a lot of transportation, it's the only way to get around, it will help you to set yourself up to be able to handle it so it's not so overwhelming once you get there. So questions like that show that it's quite different in that country than it is in America.

People like games, I've come to realize, like trivia. You can have a little trivia session in the middle and have little prizes for people that get an answer right or something about the specific country that they are going or something. I think it's useful to have, like once again, I think it's useful to have the human contact and be able to actually see that. A powerpoint presentation laying out this is different here and different there, I don't think it's as effective as maybe doing it in the small groups. I think that each country is different in their own ways of doing things and so maybe doing that. I remember a staff person doing a powerpoint presentation on gender when everybody was in the ballroom and I think that that might be more useful in a more smaller scale of a setting. I think that it's nice to have speakers that talk about their former experiences especially if you work at the UO in these offices because you've done what people are potentially going to be doing.

Orientation is important because a lot of students don't know a lot of what they are getting in to. So it's good that they get a basic idea. I would maybe have more specific examples. More personal examples of someone's experience there. Using personal experiences is really good. Really important would be to say how it can be problematic when you first get there in terms of culture shock and I think that's one of the big ones. I didn't think I would really get that as much but then I ended up getting a little depressed, not depression but a sense of loneliness. You feel like a low and you want to go back home kind of in a sense when you first get there. You don't feel comfortable at all and you don't really know what to do and you try to figure it all. So it's best to talk about that whole process and also the whole process when you get there first and the kind of phases that you might go through and also when you get back here and how that can be the hardest part for some people. The reverse culture shock. I think that was an important thing that should be covered. More cause I can't remember if we talked about it a whole lot.

I thought it was good but it was a little long. I really liked the workshops in the huge room and it was all about people and stuff and I feel like you guys should talk about political stuff even though that wasn't really a big part of my journey to my host country but it was still there. How the U.S. is viewed cause I got most of that from reading about my host country through a book that my teacher gave me to read. Talking to people but not necessarily through the program and I feel like with the Iraqi war and all that stuff it's just like maybe you touched on it and I don't specifically remember but maybe role play like if this person said this what would you say about this. And you could do that in small groups even within because there were bunches of tables you can do it in small groups within the larger presentations even. So that when they do get put into a sticky situation or a weird political thing, then they have thought about it before. Like I said I actually had no issues with that, maybe I talked to a few Italians about it but it wasn't prevalent and in maybe other countries it might be or it might depend on your experience so I think it should be brought up.

Three hours is maybe too long and so just doing it one day. Maybe just program-specific could be one day and the general one could be another day. You probably need a general idea of going to study abroad in the beginning but getting all the information in one day could be too much information. If you go to general orientation first then you can think about your program and you might come up with questions that you can ask at the program-specific.

No, I think it's set up pretty well. I chose to go last minute.

Like I said, it would have been a lot better to have somebody who had been to my host city and who would know what the city looks like to give the program-specific orientation and I think it's really cool to have someone who had studied abroad there at the actual thing to ask questions. I was writing down questions for my friend who had gone there. I understand but she probably didn't want to get up at 9 am on a Saturday. So if they got some kind of compensation or if it was appealing. I felt like prepared and almost over prepared especially with the AHA stuff about what to expect. Coming back is definitely what you would need more preparation for.

### **Web-based Participants**

#### **Have you studied abroad or traveled abroad before? If so, when, where and for how long?**

Never studied abroad before. I haven't traveled abroad before. Well, I've been to Mexico before but not outside of North America.

No, I hadn't. I never traveled outside the United States except for Canada. So I had never been abroad and so it was a big getting out of my comfort zone experience since I'm from Oregon living in Eugene. It was a good challenge for me. I was really excited but since I was going to another country I was really scared.

No, I hadn't. Just Canada and Mexico, but I had never been to Europe before.

#### **Describe your overall study abroad experience**

It was eye-opening for me especially since I was raised here my whole life and so I just needed to get out and do something new and meet new people and not be somewhere where everybody knows who I am. You go to a grocery store and everyone knows your name. It was really nice to go and see especially a big city, especially since Eugene is not that big and everything is spread out in Eugene I feel like. My host city was just a really big, booming, professional city. That was really nice to be around professionals, business-like people all the time and being in that environment. Overall experience, it was a great program, we did a lot of really great things we were always very busy. I became a lot more cultured because we went to plays every week, the theatre, we went to soccer games, just overall, they kept us busy and we did a lot and learned a lot. I think three months was the perfect amount of time to go. I would like to live there and I'd like to go back there. It made me realize that I wanted to live and work in a big city.

I always tell people that it was amazing. Probably my best term at the UO. I loved it. I definitely want to go back. My host city was definitely my favorite city. I think I went to five or



six different countries and my host city was definitely my favorite. Settling into a different culture and meeting people and the ease of traveling over there, it was just really amazing. I loved it. I would want to do it again if I can. Definitely a very positive experience. I grew as a person. I loved being at home and loved being around my family and it made me get out of my comfort zone and just experience new things and rely on other people, rely on a different family, meeting new people and becoming friends with them and making them kind of like my family. There were only 16 of us on our program and we got to really know each other well. And our site director and staff were really great.

It was just a really good time. I got to do a lot of traveling, the school work wasn't that intense, so just a lot of exploring and adventuring, really good experience. They gave us a ten-day travel break in the middle and I got to go to three different countries in ten days and that was probably the best experience. Very positive, yes.

### **Describe your housing situation**

It was great. I liked it because we lived on the outskirts of our host city so it was more residential and there were huge houses, golf courses everywhere around and it was nice to see that side of the host city also, the smaller side, or the quieter side of the host city. It was our house mom and she told us where we were supposed to be going somewhere and she would give us inside tips. It was her and her husband and their daughter and another daughter but she didn't live there. One of the daughters was our age so there were no little kids running the place. It was really great because she made us dinner every night and she did our laundry. It was nice. It made the transition of leaving here and leaving home a lot easier because they provided a family. They made their house a home for us so it was really great. When we went to Italy for the break, I was kinda feeling homesick while I was in Italy, but I wasn't feeling homesick for Eugene, I was feeling homesick for my host family's home because she made it so great for us.

They set us up in a home. They had a mom and dad and they had four kids and I had a roommate. We had a nice large room, each had a bed, closet and everything. They were about a 45 minute ride on local transportation to our actual site location. We would have breakfast there every morning, we'd make our lunches and they would make us dinner 5 or 6 times a week. We hung out a lot with them. They were always welcoming for us to watch TV with them at night or do our homework down with the kids. The younger ones were a little loud sometimes but I know almost everyone else didn't have kids so they had a much different housing experience than us and we were one of the closest families to the central area of the host city. Some took a good hour to commute. The kids were 12 and 14 and then 4 and 9 and the two younger ones would always play with each other and so it was kind of loud. We didn't care that much. In our group, we realized how well the housing coordinator set-up who we were going to live with. They weren't necessarily people who I would be best friends with but you could really tell why some of us got paired up together and it worked out really well. That was a good experience. My roommate was from east coast. I learned a little bit about the east coast since I hadn't been over there before.

I stayed with two other girls in a homestay with a host mom. She had two kids but they're older and don't live at home. So it was me and one other girl from the UO and one girl from SOU. They ended up being my best friends out of anyone in the program and my host mom was

amazing and the house was really cute and it was a really, really good experience. We had to commute. She lived in the furthest northwest neighborhood of my host city so it's not really central, like downtown. We had to commute, we had to take local transportation which took about 45 minutes to where our classes were and that's kind of a lot but that's all a part of the experience and I didn't mind taking public transportation and I like the transportation.

### **How was the site director experience?**

He was great. If I could trade brains with anybody, it would be with him. He is just so knowledgeable and he is just so excited to teach everybody. He won't pressure you to listen to him when we'd go on excursions, and he wouldn't be like, you guys come over here and listen and then if somebody was like snapping pictures, he wouldn't wait for them he would just start talking. And so if you really wanted to learn or listen to what he was going to have to tell you about something, which was always really informative, then you could go over and listen but if you didn't want to listen you didn't have to. He always had the answer to any question you had. He's the perfect person for that job. I liked having him. I can't imagine him not being there. I felt like he was our tour guide a lot of the time. Everyone always went to him for questions. He ran our meetings. He was a very big part of the program over there. We had meetings every Monday. It was half an hour or less. They would give us a one-page sheet and it would have our agenda for the week. It would say what we were doing every day. And it would say what was coming up next week. You would carry around that sheet around all week. It would include public transportation information and where you were going to and stuff so it was cool.

He was really great. He knew everything. It was really nice the first couple of days, we had meetings with him and he pretty much went over everything we were going to do, the calendar for the whole three months. He was really welcoming to any questions or concerns we had. He would help us if we were wanting to visit a different country or go to this musical or play, he would give us instructions. I remember the second day he took us all over the host city and they had a couple times for us, a boat ride, visits to famous buildings, he was really great. I didn't really know that we would have somebody like that over there to take us to do so many things. He took us to other cities with another teacher. It was really nice to have him there. I think my experience would have been different if it weren't for him. I don't know if, he wasn't there, if we would still have gone and traveled in the host country as we did. But it was really nice, anyone we could have there to help us out and to guide us and he took us to get the public transportation maps and all that kind of thing and you just basically needed someone there that knew everything. It was very nice.

He was really good. He took us on, he did the introduction, he was always available, but he also took us on a lot of excursions. He wrote a book about the host city and he gave us a copy. He just knew everything, he would map out everything. He just took us and knew everything. He was basically a tour guide, it was really cool. He arranged all of these excursions within the host country and we went on five different excursions around the host country and I wouldn't have gone to those places if it weren't for him. It would have been an overall different experience if it weren't for the excursions. Yeah, I enjoyed having a site director.

**How was the NW faculty experience?**

She was great, from the UO. I don't find it necessary to bring some body from your home campus with us. Because I just feel like that makes the program cost so much more because you are paying for them to come over paying for them to stay, paying for them to teach. I think we could have had another local teacher and not somebody for the UO. I think for what the actual program costs were to take them over and everything else I don't think it's worth it. She was a great teacher, she was the nicest person I've ever met in my life.

Everyone loved her. I was really sad I didn't take a class from her. I wish I had. She seems laid back, really fun, really nice, almost like another mother there. She and her husband would come with us on excursions and they were really nice and really great. They had invited us over in two different groups to their apartment flat and had pizza, drinks and stuff for us. We got to know them really well so it was really fun. She was kind of learning along with us about all the different experiences we were doing and places to go so it was really fun. She was like us, learning all the time. Another good resource and it was nice to have her from the UO because she knew our background.

She's amazing. She's so friendly. She taught some classes but I didn't take classes from her but she was always around. She and her husband had an apartment in the city and they had us all over for a pizza party one time and they said that if we're ever out at night we could stay there but that is the kind of person she was, really sweet and always available to help and went on all the excursions with. She and her husband were really great. She just emailed me to get together for a reunion type of thing here in Eugene, so nice. I'm excited. She also talked to us about credits transferring and it was good to have a contact at the UO there.

**What were the valuable aspects of the general study abroad orientation?**

Having, after you take the whole test, it was all still there for you to go back and look on. And I thought that the checklists, at the end of every chapter, you could go back and look at the checklist. If I was like, what do I need to do before I leave, in terms of taking shots at the health center, I could go back and see what I need to do for that. So it was nice to have all that information there if you needed to go back and look at it. Like you said, the other term, they just went to a big three hour thing, I don't know if they took notes or handed them stuff, but it was just nice to have it all there at your disposal if you needed it. It was really wordy. I think that, me and my friend, who I went with, we would just go through as fast as we can and then find the answers because you could get it wrong and retake it. The first few I read through it all and then went through the tests and the last ones I was like, I'm just getting through this and I would just go straight to the questions and try to answer the questions first. The content was good if you need to know that. But I felt like it was wordy. I learned a lot. Especially in terms of, well like, the coming back from your trip, the reentry shock. I had no idea what that was. There were a lot of things that I didn't know. I can't remember the specific things but I know that there was definitely some things, there were some things that were interesting.

Well, it was really nice not having to come for a long day and listen. We could kind of spread it out, almost like an online class almost, where you can pick and choose when you wanted too just read about the different things that they wanted to tell us. So that was really nice. I think it did give us valuable information that I wouldn't have otherwise thought of. I remember I had read

something about color copying my passport and sending it to someone and so I quickly emailed the person from Portland that I had sent it to and told her and she didn't even know about it. And I think it was also good because we could read something and then later go back and look at it again. But I think it was just another step in helping us prepare to go abroad. It wasn't a huge burden. It was really easy and the quizzes weren't like anything hard. I liked the video parts where people talked because I'm a visual person, so that helped. It was a good resource. It said things that I already knew but also gave me more information that I wouldn't have known.

I remember referencing that Bb orientation while I was on my program in terms of, well, wondering when the credits were going to show up on my account and I would reference back to that. I do remember things. I think the quizzes made you, I don't think I would have read through it as thoroughly without the quizzes. It was pretty clear. I liked that the specific information was highlighted in the quizzes, things you would need to know. Otherwise I would have just mindlessly looked over it. The little video clips were good I remember.

### **How did the general orientation affect your study abroad experience?**

The reentry shock. I didn't have it but during the last week, the site director said that we were going to have a meeting about reentry shock and I was like, "oh yeah, I remember that from our orientation." The different ethnicities, Eugene is, I feel like is very white, and my host city has so many different cultures, especially Indian. Going through the orientation I was able to prepare myself a little bit better when I went over there. I wasn't like, "what are these people doing here" but it was very interesting because I'm not used to that, not used to being around so many people of different colors. Mentally preparing me. I knew that there would be, I know Eugene is not known for cultural diversity, but that part was good.

I don't think I was ever abroad and thought of that. When we had met with our program coordinator and had that meeting, he gave us a packet. I'm thinking a lot of it was online but I can't remember specifically. At least when we were with him, we talked a lot about computers that we had, our finances what to carry with us, and I'm sure the online had that as well. What to always carry on us, how much money we needed, what type of exchanges, cash exchanges we should use. That helps a lot. So that's probably the only thing I can think about.

It made me aware mostly of how it would affect my schooling back at the UO. It didn't really affect it that much. I didn't really think of it that often, only in reference of credits transferring, when it would show on my transcript or when I need to register for next terms classes. I remember remembering that from the online orientation. It didn't really affect me that much. When we first got there they had an orientation with us and the site director referenced some of the things that were on the online orientation and I remember it explained in the online orientation, like culture shock but I didn't necessarily feel that too much when I was there so I didn't really think about it. It would have been cool, personally for our program, to have gotten more maps of where we are staying in relation to where we were going to be studying. Because I wasn't that familiar with the area when I got there so, I don't know how program-specific those online orientations are but if there was something like that, something to be more familiar, they gave us a map of the city, but not of my host family's area. So that would be nice. The maps would have been good to talk about at program-specific orientation. It wasn't too thorough but it would have been a good time to talk about it. He gave us a packet and highlighted some things

specifically that ended up not being very relevant when we actually got there. For example, he talked a lot about how we needed print outs of things that said how much money we had in our account so that when we're traveling over borders they might stop and see that and I did that but I never needed it. He also told us we were going to this city in the host country and we didn't so we were confused.

**What were some things you wish you had been told in the general study abroad orientation?**

I think everything was pretty much covered. There were seven different chapters right? I felt like they were covering a really large amount. I think it really did a good job breaking it up in sections and covering all the large topics and so no, I didn't feel like I missed out on anything.

Not that I can remember. When we did go and talk to the site director that information seemed a little bit more specific and I think more important to me than the online orientation and so have the online orientation incorporate some of what he was talking about but it sounds like the online was more like not as specific, general just for anyone studying abroad and so probably not.

**What were the most enjoyable parts of the orientation?**

The videos were cool. Using the real life, they were testimonies about the things. It wasn't all readings. Wasn't one of them a teacher? I remember having someone you know, real life words, being told was a lot better than reading it all. It adds more.

I liked the video clips. It's easier for me to sit and watch someone instead of reading it. That was nice. It just gave the information that I wouldn't have received otherwise. I think the more information I got about the program just helped me not to freak out about going abroad. So I think it was really informative but specifically I can't really think of any.

The health center nurse was a funny video. That was the only part that was fun or funny.

**Do you think you would have learned as much if the general orientation were classroom-based instead of web-based?**

It's hard to tell. I think everyone's different. I think I learn better if I'm actually doing it live. Like if I'm out interacting with people rather than just reading a screen. I think you soak it in more when you're live. But like I said, it was really nice to go back and read that stuff and have it all there on the screen. But I don't know how much people really take in during a three-hour orientation. I don't know how much you really just socialize. But for me, I think I would benefit more from a live one. The online thing took the same time right? Two or three hours? With Bb you can do it at your leisure. I think they both have their benefits. I guess I like the way we did it but that's just because I hadn't known that there was another option. It was really nice being able to do it, like I'll do two today and go back tomorrow and do a couple more instead of being forced to take three hours of your day and go to this "live" thing. It wasn't daunting. I'm pretty internet savvy. Maybe it could have used more interactive things because like I said, towards the end I was not even reading through it, I was just trying to get the orientation out of the way. I just sped through it so maybe more things that would make you actually... I liked how when you got things wrong, it wasn't like, sorry you can't go abroad. You could answer wrong and go back and fix your answers around, so that was cool.

I honestly think I learn more from this online orientation than I would instead of coming in for three hours. Even though I like the video clips and seeing someone do it. The online was a lot nicer because we weren't forced to sit there and hear all of it at one take, at once. We could read something and have a while to think about it and come back and hear something else. We also weren't tired. After three hours I could just see myself not wanting to do it anymore. I think it was a lot easier to do it online and I probably retained more information doing it that way. I'm not daunted by online orientation. I thought it was completely fine. Doing online classes, somebody whose familiar with Bb no problem it was just like that, easy to follow. I would say the online thing, a lot of people these days are really online savvy and if they can do it on a computer instead of go to class I think they would rather almost do that. It kinda depends on what they are studying but this way it's really easy. You can do it, go through it, whenever you wanted and you weren't forced to sit there for a while and have someone just talk to you. So I would think the online.

I don't think I would have learned as much if I went to the "live" thing because I would have spaced out during a lot of it. Especially if it was a big thing but breaking out into small groups might have been better for focusing but I feel like, I like doing things like that on my own, learning things on my own and so I don't think I would have necessarily have paid more attention in a lecture type of situation. I feel comfortable doing things online. I guess I'm online-savvy. I've taken some online classes before, I like doing that. Reading things and just knowing what I need to know, and taking the test. I don't think I would have liked to have a small group to talk about those cultural, culture shock and things like that. I think this is more effective for me at least, the online. Yeah, that was nice, I did it in multiple sittings. So I got to fit it into my schedule. I think college students probably prefer web. I know some people who had to do the in-person orientation thing and it was kind of like a burden. A lot of people from my program were from different schools around Oregon and Washington and my friend who came here for her orientation, she was going abroad and she had to drive here and it was really early in the morning and she didn't really get that much out of it.

**Do you think it is important to have general and program-specific orientations?**

I think you have to. Because especially if you were going to somewhere where they spoke a different language, crossing a language barrier it would be important to have in your specific meeting. It was also nice to meet with everybody that was going with us, everyone sat around the table, cause that was the only time we met the people on the program. That was neat, also. In the specific packet, he gave us the conversion of the Celsius to Fahrenheit. It was nice to have that so I cut that out and took it with me cause I didn't know how to convert. Since my host city is the third most expensive city in the world, so it was nice to know that before going. He talked to us about how the price of a CD there is \$30 because it's already so expensive there plus the dollar is so poor. So it was nice to have things like that, things to be aware of when you're over there.

Yes, I really liked the online orientation and I thought it was a lot of great information. Coming with the program coordinator, it was nice for one thing to meet the other people I was going to go abroad with so that was good. And also the physical packet that he gave us was nice. Even

more information than we had, different things we wanted to think about. There were things we wouldn't have thought about.

I like the program-specific orientation just because I got to see people who were going to be in my program, but we didn't get to know each other then. It was good because you feel more at ease and you can picture some people you are going with and introduce yourself. I feel like the program-specific you pay attention to it because it's your own specific program, detailed information that you might need. I think the general one is good, especially if you haven't been out of the country before, like I hadn't been. If I were to go again, I don't think it would be as important because I probably would have brushed some of it off, like I've traveled before. I think the program-specific is more important than the general one.

**Any suggestions or comments for Study Abroad Programs about the general study abroad orientation process?**

I just remember it was just lengthy and long, but I feel like you have to, how can you make it less when you have to cover all those points. It wasn't horribly daunting. It was fine. That was definitely, definitely key, how convenient it was. You can do it at 2 am and just go do it. So whatever works is good.

I would continue doing the general orientation online and then have the site-specific meeting. I thought my program coordinator was a great resource, I would email him and he would always get back to me. The personal interview was pretty informative and they asked me questions that I would have never thought about like the politics question. It got me to think about different things. It was really short, if they could think of other questions like that, that would be great to get for other students to think about what they will come across. It was informative, it wasn't too long or too bad or it wasn't repetitive. It was all necessary and it prepared me as well.

I don't think so. I'm pretty pleased by it. There was nothing where I got to my host city and wished that they would have told me about this. Except the map thing and that's really not a big deal because I could have done that on my own but I think they pretty well prepare you. I think it was a good orientation. Orientation is important so everybody is on the same page.