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Type: **Research-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation**

Empowering students: Keys to a successful study abroad experience

Saturday 17 May 2025 13:05 (25 minutes)

TITLE

Empowering students: Keys to a successful study abroad experience

RELEVANT SIG

Study Abroad

FORMAT

Research-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation (25 minutes, including Q&A)

Short English description

KEYWORDS

Study abroad (SA)
acculturation
extracurricular integration
coordination

First-time presenter?

ABSTRACT

Study abroad (SA) programs benefit participants' personal growth but also present challenges as students adapt to new sociocultural contexts (Allen & Ramonda, 2023). Successful pre-departure preparation is essential to provide students with the academic, cultural and emotional foundations (Humphreys & Baker, 2021). Moreover, host university SA managers and coordinators play critical roles in facilitating successful sojourns, but their voices are underrepresented in the literature (Allen, 2023). To fill this gap, the authors surveyed 28 mobility staff from seven countries, asking how the SA experience can be improved for Japanese students, and triangulated their data with responses from 105 English majors who sojourned in 2023. Results highlighted

that, although the home university students were comparatively well-prepared for their SA experience, four main themes arose from the coordinators: preparation, student empowerment, acculturation and extracurricular integration. While student responses generally affirmed the partner universities' positive observations about their preparedness, they also highlighted challenges related to differing expectations of student independence, cultural nuances, and integrating extracurricular activities with academic demands. These results suggest that before SA, home and host universities should cooperate in developing realistic student expectations about their independence, cultural differences and extracurricular engagement, ultimately leading to a rewarding and enriching SA experience.

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