

**Training Module:** Hosting Orientation Conference, March 2009 Las Vegas

**Session Title:** Tool Box for Hosting Orientation

**Session #:** 1

**Time (in hours/minutes):** 90 minutes

**Methodologies:**

- **Brainstorm**
- **Experiential Activities**
- **Internet demo**
- **PPT**

**Materials Needed:**

- **Internet connection**
- **LCD projector**
- **Props** – Calendar, grocery list, clock, hosting orientation leader's guide, wooden spoon, copy of an evaluation, blue fabric, German and US flag (any size, paper or fabric), suitcase/tool box, text books, ipod, name tags, play dough, world map
- **Communication Styles handout – 1 per person**
- **Masking tape**
- **Flip chart and markers**
- **Music (via laptop or boom box)**
- **Red, yellow and green strips of paper one of each color for each person.**

**Preparation**

- **Map out squares on floor in front of the room per instructions given in Activity 4 – Sense of Space**
- **Prepare flip charts as instructed in each section**
  - **Objectives, open window, space stats (2)**

**Behavioral Learning Objectives**

**By the end of this session participants will be able to:**

- Identify characteristics of a high quality orientation.
- Observe or participate in at least three new orientation activities
- Locate on the AFS Wiki where orientation related resources can be found.
- Discuss orientation best practices.

## Activity 1: Brainstorm

Time: 15 minutes

**As individuals enter the room, ask them to note by sticky the country outside of the US to which they feel the strongest connection.**

### Step 1:

Welcome group members and thank them for coming. Ask how many are directly involved in planning or running hosted participant orientations, host family orientations? Ask them how many of their teams have an orientation coordinator.

Review objectives of the session that we will be doing several activities and after each one we will take a couple of minutes to evaluate and discuss how these might be adapted for use in different contexts. In order to fit more activities in, we will be doing abridged versions of the activities with less discussion than you would normally have in an orientation session.

### Step 2:

Ask group members to brainstorm responses to the following questions:

- 1. What are characteristics of a high quality orientation?**
  - a. Possible answers – achieves objectives of orientation as specified in the leader's guide, appeals to a variety of learning styles, well organized, effective learning environment, allow for breaks, involves people with different perspectives, levels of experience,
- 2. Present Learning Pyramid (PPT)**
- 3. What are the benefits of providing both hosted participants and host families with high quality orientations prior to and during their experience?**
  - a. Possible answers – comply with DoS and CSIET regs, helps set realistic expectations, opportunity for families to ask questions, establish relationships with others that can serve as a support network later, meet their liaison, be reassured from former host families that we can do this, allow volunteers to see where families/stus might be challenged by the experience and allow them to intervene proactively, reinforce rules and regs found in written materials, reduce hostfam changes and support cases, etc.
- 4. Research – 5 years, host family partnership, most recently we have seen the impact in of the Handbook for US Families Hosting German Participants, result in a 50% decrease in the number of host family changes between August and December 2008.** (We will reassess these and other factors at the end of the year...) The orientations we provide for host families and participants play a large role in facilitating this partnership, as do our participant and family liaisons.

## **Activity 2 – Fun with Play Dough**

**Time 15 minutes**

### **Step 1**

1. Divide the group into several groups based on their position on the world map and give each group a container of play dough. Note that in a real orientation session you could have each person introduce him or herself and briefly explain their connection to the chosen country.
2. Instruct one member of each group to come to the front of the room. Explain that you will be telling them a word and that they will have to go back to the group and create the word using the play dough. The other group members are to guess what their teammate is trying to make, and when they do, the person to his or right must come to you to get a second word and so on. There is to be **NO TALKING** during the activity. The first group to get through all of the words “wins.” **Note have the same number of words as there are individuals in each group and ask a facilitator or staff member to join in order to even out the numbers.**

### **Step 2**

1. **Discuss the following questions with the group:**
  - a. How did you feel when you were trying to make your object?
  - b. How did it feel when your teammates guessed your object?
  - c. How did it feel when you were trying to guess the object?
  - d. What would have made it easier for you team to have completed this task?
  - e. How does this related to the experience of an exchange student in a host family?
2. **Ask the following questions:**
  - a. What did you like/dislike about this activity?
  - b. How might you adapt it for use in another context?

### **Step 3 – Wiki Orientation Tutorial (PPT)**

#### **Break**

**Time: 5 minutes**

**Activity 3: Sense of Space**  
**Time: 15 minutes**

Step 1:

Prior to the session, create equally-sized squares on the floor (size: 1.2-1.5 meters). Use masking tape or chalk to create these squares. The size of the squares should take into account the size of the individuals who will be participating in the exercise. The squares should be located next to each other with one meter between them. Place a large bowl or tub filled with water, or a piece of blue fabric, between the two squares. This symbolizes the Atlantic Ocean between the United States and Europe.

**Prepare one flip chart with the following information**

*USA: 33 individuals per square km*  
*Germany: 230 individuals per square km*

*This represents a ratio of 1 to 7.*

**Prepare a flip chart with the following information**

<b>More than Germany</b>	<b>In between the USA and Germany</b>	<b>Less than the USA</b>
Belgium, India, Japan 337 Philippines 266	Italy 192 Switzerland 183 China 133 Czech Republic 131 Thailand 118 Hungary 110 France, Portugal 108	Venezuela 26 Sweden 22 Chile 20 Finland 17 Russia 9

Source: [www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com)

Ask for 2 volunteers to assist with the activity. Explain that one will be a German student and the other a US student. Ask each one to take his or her place in the square and hand him or her, the US or German flag.

Ask them how they feel now, in anticipation of their journey?

Explain that the rest of the activity will demonstrate the population density of the US vs. Germany. Refer to the flip chart. Ask for 6 more volunteers to join the German student. They will represent the family of the German student and the host family of the US student. Ask the “groups” to do the following **without stepping outside of the boundaries of the square:**

- Walk around in a circle until I say stop
- Introduce yourself to the member of your group
- Dance to the music

Now wave good bye to your child and welcome your new student. Ask the students to switch places by crossing “the Atlantic”. Repeat the three activities listed above. Tell the host family to wave good bye to their student as s/he returns home.

Step 2:

**1. Questions for the host family/host siblings/students:**

- How did you feel before the trip across the Atlantic
- What did you experience?
- How did you feel after the trip?

**2. Questions for all:**

- What did you notice when you were watching the exchange students?
- How did they act – first in their home country and later in the host country?
- How might a different sense of space impact a student’s experience in your home? How might it impact you?

**3. Reveal the prepared flipchart containing the population densities of other countries.** Explain that at this point you would normally go on to discuss the following questions.

- Did you understand why a hosted student’s sense of space may be different than your own?
- How would you describe it?
- What kind advantages/disadvantages are related to population density?

Step 3:

Pose the following questions to the group:

- What did you like/dislike about this activity?
- What other questions might you include at the end to prompt further discussion about cultural differences?
- If you had run the session, would you have done anything differently?

**Walk everyone through the Wiki- Orientations, Table of Orientation Publications, How to provide Feedback, Orientation Table, Orientation Experts, Country Specific Information.**

## **Activity 4: Communication Styles**

**Time: 20 minutes**

### Step 1:

Explain that we are now going to do an activity that deals with communication styles and misunderstandings that can take place when people with different style are unaware of the other person's style.

Distribute the Communication Styles Handout and create 6 groups by counting off by 6. Instruct group 1 to review and discuss styles 1a and 1b only, group 2, style 2a and 2b only, and so on. Allow **10 minutes** for discussion. **Tell them not to worry if they don't have enough time to answer all of the questions.**

### Step 2

Reconvene the group and explain that you will now do a brief role play and afterwards would like people to identify the communication style of each character and what behaviors led them to this conclusion.

### **Conduct Role Play "Are you cold?"**

### Step 3

Lead a discussion per the below:

#### **1. What do you think happened here other than the words that were spoken?**

- a. Participant is cold and tries to send message to host sibling that she is cold. Participant is upset about/uncomfortable with the fact that the host sibling got ketchup on her sweater and acted very casually about it. She was trying to save face for her host sister by making light of the situation and her giggling was an indication of her discomfort. She may also have been upset because the host sibling borrowed her sweater without asking.

#### **2. What style/s of communication was each character using? How was this manifested?**

- a. Participant – high context and indirect, manifested by question about whether host sibling was cold when she was cold, looking for her sweater as another signal that she was cold. She expected the host sibling to take into consideration these "clues: and come to the conclusion that she was cold.
- b. Host sibling – direct and low context manifested by brief and to the point answers.

#### **3. How might each character perceive the other/s? Why?**

- a. Participant may perceive the host sibling to be insensitive towards her, even rude, because she failed to perceive the participant's need to get warm and subsequently do something about it.
- b. Host sibling may be confused by the participant's giggling and/or view it as juvenile behavior. May be clueless about the needs of the participant, or may think, "If she is so cold, she should just close the window herself."

**Stop here and explain that other questions that could be discussed are:**

- What would you tell each character to help them understand why the others behaved the way that they did?
- What advice would you give each character to help them communicate more effectively with their fellow characters in the future?
- Have you experienced any of the kinds of differences in communication styles demonstrated here? If so, how will you handle them in the future?

Step 4

Ask the following questions:

- What did you like/dislike about this activity
- Would you change anything about it?
- How would you envision using it?

## Activity 5: Hosting Orientation Tool Box

Time: 15 minutes

Step 1: Explain that you have several items in your tool box and ask individuals to come up in turn, pull out a “tool” and explain to the group how they feel this particular tool can benefit orientation quality or attendance. Encourage help from the audience. Demonstrate with one item – wooden spoon. Record answers on a flip chart.

- **Wooden spoon** – mix things up. Use activities that appeal to a variety of different learning styles. Don’t just do all PPT or all experiential activities. Change the seating in the room between sessions. Go outdoors if possible. Mix of the groups so that people are not stuck in the same groups for the entire day. Rotate the location so that the same people are not always driving the longest distance.
- **Calendar** – plan ahead, **show planning template, invitation template on wiki**, send communication to students AND families, larger teams consider offering more than one day/time for host family orientation, rotate location, etc. Communicate dates to neighboring Teams and Chapters to accommodate individuals who can’t attend your scheduled session, facilitate car pooling, Post easily identifiable signs/arrows directing people to the site. Provide the entire address so that people can Map quest or provide directions when possible.
- **Grocery list** – reduce costs by making own snacks, provide a healthy, easily identifiable snack/meal – helps keep energy level up, have a vegetarian option if possible, delegate the snacks to someone solely responsible for dealing with them, try to get food donations, have one or two people manage the snacks and nothing else.
- **Clock** – build in time for breaks at least every hour or so, stretching, fresh air, facilitators - assign a time keep to help you keep on track, start on time and end of time to set a precedent. Be flexible, if the group wants to spend more time on one topic vs. another, adapt the schedule to accommodate it possible. Take into consideration traffic patterns when planning the time of the event.
- **Leader’s Guide-** Provide training to group leaders. Send them a link to the wiki well before the event (**show where located on wiki**), attend any training events offered in your area, provide mentor opportunities for less experience volunteers/returnees.

### Step 2:

Ask the group the following questions:

- What items could you add to this box to represent best practices?
- What did you like about this activity?
- How might this “tool box” idea be used in an orientation session?
  - Items represent cultural differences, policies or rules, challenges of hosting, benefits of hosting, strategies for adjusting, etc.
  - Mention creator and context – (Elisabeth Bier at OC training in 2007) *“The Original Box was a cookie jar with an American flag on*

*the front. I could not find any of those, so I used shoe boxes, wrapped them in red paper and glued a blue star on it. Inside the box I placed the following items for Mid-year. The kids pick up one and discuss it. It's a great tool. Liz Ryzketel started this many years ago. She was an AA in the 1950's. I learned from the Cluster coordinator, Karen Barnes, and used it for our students at mid year in January."*

- What, if anything, would you have done differently to make the activity more effective today or in the future if you adapt for use during one of your orientations?

#### **Step 5 – 5 minutes**

Review objectives and conduct quick visual/color coded evaluation of whether each was achieved. Each person will hold up the appropriate color strip depending on their assessment of the objective and leader will tally total numbers on a flip chart. Green – yes! Yellow- partially, Red – No.

## **Role Play – Are you cold?**

**Characters** - Host sister, female participant

**Props** - i-pod or set of earphones, two chairs or seat characters on the floor, two books, nametags for characters

**Communication Styles:** High/low context, direct/indirect

**Setting** (one of the actors to read aloud) The participant and host sister are sitting in their bedroom doing homework. Host sister is listening to her i-pod. The window is open.

**Participant** - *Are you cold?*

**Hostsib** (turns down music) - *What?!*

**Participant** - *Are you cold?*

**Hostsib** - (with a shake of her head) *No.* (turns up music)

**Participant** - (After silence for about 10 seconds gets up and appears to be looking for something.)

**Hostsib** - (Turns down music) *What are you looking for?*

**Participant** - (Rubbing arms slightly as if she were cold.) *My blue sweater.*

**Hostsib** - *It's in the laundry basket. I borrowed it yesterday and I got ketchup on it.*

**Participant** - (Smiling and giggling) *Oh... um... It's no problem, no problem, don't worry about it...*

**Hostsib** - (Starts singing with song)

**Participant** (Looking a slightly hurt and confused, gathers her books and exits the room.)

**Hostsib** (Continues to do homework and does not notice the participant leave.)

## Communication Styles and Discussion Questions

Style	Description	Communication Tips
1a. Linear	Communication is conducted in a straight line, moving in a linear way, toward a main point. "Getting to the point" is very important and the point is stated explicitly. Not getting to the point is seen as a time waster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be brief</li> <li>• Preface your remarks with "the point is"</li> <li>• Provide only as much information as the other person needs</li> <li>• Be explicit about the main point</li> <li>• Do not deviate from the main point</li> </ul>
1b. Circular	Communication is conducted in a circular manner around the main point. The point may be left unstated because the verbal and nonverbal information provided is sufficient for understanding. Stating the point explicitly is seen as insulting to the other person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be elegant and flowing with your remarks</li> <li>• Never preface a comment with "the point is"</li> <li>• Embellish your remarks with stories and anecdotes. Let the story make the point</li> <li>• Let the other person infer the meaning of your comments from the story</li> </ul>
2a. Direct	What one means is stated in a very straightforward and direct manner. There is no "beating around the bush." Directness is equated with honesty and respect for the other person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the other person's time</li> <li>• Don't create ambiguity or uncertainty by avoiding the issue</li> <li>• Be straightforward</li> </ul>
2b. Indirect	Meaning is conveyed by subtle means such as nonverbal behavior, parables and stories, suggestions and implication. Indirectness is equated with politeness and respect for the other person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the other person's feelings</li> <li>• Don't put the other person on the spot by being direct</li> <li>• Be polite</li> </ul>
3a. Low context	The context of the situation is not assumed to be known. Things must be explained clearly and ambiguously meaning must be expressed precisely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always communicate clearly, completely, and unambiguously</li> <li>• Don't leave understanding to chance</li> </ul>
3b. High context	The context for communication is assumed to be known. Hence it is unnecessary, even insulting to explain things and state meaning precisely. Meaning is taken from context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always respect the other person's understanding of the situation</li> <li>• Leave understanding up to the other person</li> </ul>
4a. Attached	Communication is carried out with feeling and emotion. Issues are discussed with passion and commitment. Communication is very expressive. Sharing one's values and feelings about the issues is highly valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your views with passion and conviction</li> <li>• If you care about an idea, you show it</li> <li>• Bring yourself as a person into the discussion and show who you are</li> </ul>
4b. Detached	Communication is carried out in a calm and impersonal manner. This is equated with objectivity which is valued. Highly expressive, emotional, and engaged communication is inappropriate because this is seen as personalizing the issues and is biased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your views dispassionately</li> <li>• Avoid being overly emotional</li> <li>• Avoid personalizing the discussion – keep yourself out of it</li> </ul>

5a. Idea-focused	The emphasis is on ideas which are seen as separate from the person. Thus, disagreement with another person's idea is acceptable and even valued. It is not seen as a personal attack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen carefully to the ideas being discussed</li> <li>• If you disagree with someone's idea, say so</li> <li>• Because a person's ideas are wrong doesn't mean there is something wrong with that person</li> </ul>
5b. Person-focused	The emphasis is on the person, hence great importance is attached to the feelings of the other person. Issues and ideas are not separated from the person. Thus, disagreement with someone's ideas must be handled very carefully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to the person. Be attentive to feelings</li> <li>• In your communication, be careful not to hurt the other person's feelings</li> <li>• Understand that an attack on someone's idea is an attack on that person</li> </ul>
6a. Formal	Communication is governed by strict rules regarding such things as: rules of address, ways to address persons of different age and status, topics which can and cannot be discussed, etc. Communication in many respects is highly ritualized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study the rules of communication in the target society and follow them</li> </ul>
6b. Informal	Communication is less bound to specific conventions. Persons have more flexibility in what they say and under what circumstances. Informal communication might be demonstrated by the use of the first name, for example.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to find out what is allowable in the host society and follow the conventions</li> </ul>

Break into small groups or pairs and discuss the following questions relative to your assigned styles:

1. In what context have you observed or experienced each style of communication? For example, was it used in a particular setting, by a particular group of people or person, in a particular country, on TV or in a movie?
2. What are some advantages of each style?
3. How might someone who tends to use one style perceive someone who tends to use the opposite style?
4. Of the contrasting pair, which style would you say you tend to use more?