I wish that this edited volume had been available in 1998 when I began to lay the groundwork for a Maymester study abroad program for pre-service teachers that commenced two years later. Little did I imagine, or appreciate, then, the full extent of the challenges I would face, any more than I could have predicted that I would subsequently direct that program for 12 consecutive years. Much of what I learned, often muddling through blindly and naively, would, with the benefit of this volume, have been learned much sooner, with fewer false starts and dead ends. That is another way of saying that the contents of the chapters that follow ring true and jibe with my experience.

But neither did I imagine then the extent of the rewards, professional and personal, that would accrue during those years. Those rewards far outweighed the myriad of formidable challenges, ranging from the mundane bureaucratic to the stimulating academic and intellectual, that are inherent to planning and conducting a study abroad program—many of which are unique to education programs and the faculty and students who comprise them. I suspect that all of the contributors to this volume are familiar with that balance sheet. The potential rewards of study abroad come with a high price tag in time, energy, and personal involvement, and clearly require much higher levels of professional engagement than in any conventional course. But, almost anyone who has made that investment will attest to the compensatory dividends that are usually immediately evident, and often multiplicative for years to come.

Foremost among those rewards, for me, is the unparalleled gratification from knowing, with far more certainty than any other of my professional activities, that my efforts substantively influenced the perspectives and educational practices—and the personal lives—of approximately 250 preservice teachers. But, that influence is not limited to students. Few faculty who are involved in leading study abroad programs would fail to realize that a study abroad program affects them at least as much as it does the student participants. Another clear reward was the opportunity to collaborate closely with outstanding colleagues (at home and abroad) and with doctoral students, without whose help and insights the program would have not been possible, nor as rewarding on several levels—and indeed, not as much fun. The typical camaraderie students enjoy with fellow student in a study abroad experience can be no less enriching, memorable, and enjoyable among the faculty who collaborate to lead them.

It is especially gratifying that two of the lead authors of chapters in this volume (Chapters 1 & 6) became involved with the program when they worked with me as doctoral students and who now, as successful professors in their own right, are leading the program with their own students, as I move closer to retirement. I tried to model for them, clearly with some success (although they are exceptionally capable), that it is manageable to engage fully with a study abroad program while maintaining a rich, diverse, and productive professional life, that is, one consistent with the expectations of a university professorship. It is possible, although certainly not always easy. Nonetheless, any untenured faculty
member needs to approach involvement in study abroad cautiously and realistically. For them, too, this volume may be useful, both in defining the scope of the issues that must be addressed and in providing insights and suggestions for those who decide they can manage the challenge without jeopardizing their professional advancement, especially at research institutions. However, a conscious and honest assessment of one’s personal qualities is also highly recommended for anyone contemplating leading a study abroad program. Organizational and interpersonal skills, emotional stability, and flexibility in the face of the unexpected are high among the essential qualities.

But, the value of this volume is much more than as a pragmatic guide and as a source for advice and innovative ideas. It also admirably makes the case for study abroad experiences as a vital component of preparing teachers, and by extension their students, for a globalized world. Further, at least implicitly, the chapters that follow help move the discourse about education beyond its role in addressing the economic dimensions of globalization. As can be seen from any daily news feed, globalization is at least as much a social as an economic phenomenon, and arguably more so. It is hard to imagine any aspect of a preservice teacher’s preparation with more potential to enhance the appropriate and necessary sensitivities implied by a socially globalized world, especially given the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of the students today’s future teachers will routinely teach. In that regard, it is fitting that a distinctive and welcome feature of this volume, is that it is not U.S.-centric. It includes contributors from Turkey, China, the Czech Republic, and Pakistan.

It is a troublesome paradox that preservice teachers, who are expected to prepare the next generation for such a globalized world, are among the least likely of university students to participate in study abroad. As several of the chapters in this volume point out, there are complex, but not insurmountable, conditions that account for that documented disparity. In any event, I hope that this book will become, as indeed it has the potential to become, a clarion call for education programs to embrace study abroad experiences for preservice (and to some extent, in-service) teachers more systematically. For example, teacher education programs need to explicitly incentivize wider participation in study abroad, particularly by addressing the often lock-step cohorts that define many of those programs and that make extended study abroad understandably difficult and unattractive. Providing resources to support the development and implementation of study abroad programs needs to become a higher administrative priority within education programs, and university-level study abroad offices need to accommodate the unique circumstances of programs in education and to work closely with education faculty to address the underrepresentation of future teachers in study abroad programs. For example, one of the more intractable issues, highlighted by a few of this volume’s authors, is how we make study abroad more attainable for financially challenged students.

Finally, this volume is a welcome and needed contribution to the scholarly literature pertaining to study abroad, useful to anyone interested in study abroad, regardless of discipline. In the final analysis, study abroad is an academic experience—again, no less for faculty leaders than for student participants. Eventually, our hope for students is that the immediacy of living in the moment that is natural in the earliest days of studying and living abroad ideally gives way to deeper reflection and learning. Likewise, the longer most of us are involved with study abroad programs, the more we are attracted to and reach out to the available literature. The chapters in this volume ably satisfy that need.
Foreword

Reading this volume has not only made me wish that I had it back in 1998, it has awakened a dormant excitement that fueled and sustained my involvement across many years. I envy readers at a point in their careers where they will be able to apply its lessons to their own journeys, figuratively and literally.

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