Preface

*The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.* - Saint Augustine

Traveling gets into your blood and sharing your experiences with others becomes a way of life. At least that is how we believe most study abroad facilitators and faculty leaders feel about their travel excursions. There is nothing more exciting than seeing a place you have been many times through the eyes of one of your students. The joy that we experience is the reason why many of us choose to lead programs abroad.

In our roles as teacher educators, we have led many study abroad programs over the last decade. However, we have often wondered if other program leaders and study abroad administrators think about curriculum and program development in the same manner as we have. We wondered what type of learning experiences were offered to preservice and in-service teachers and students in other content areas. Which locations offered venues for positive learning opportunities for university students? How long should a study abroad experience be? What type of credit should be awarded? How can the educational experience best be enhanced? Bringing together the work of fellow educators to address these questions was the major impetus behind this book.

University educators are well aware of the many competing demands for our time. University faculty can often feel overwhelmed by all of the requirements for teaching, service, scholarship and professional development. How can we add one more thing to our overflowing plates? The authors have asked that very question. However, how can we *not* add another focus when that ‘one more thing’ is international work? Directing a travel abroad experience is enriching in many ways for educators. Personally, study abroad allows us to explore exciting new destinations and travel internationally. Professionally, study abroad brings a valuable global influence to our classrooms and helps us develop students who are intercultural educators.

Our personal positive experiences with study abroad led us to consider pulling together thoughts from our colleagues to address the challenges and successes of developing curriculum for study abroad programs. As the book continued to develop, our understanding of education broadened to include higher education and other disciplines as well. We found that many faculty members and students were seeking similar information and expertise on designing and implementing travel abroad programs in different destinations around the world.

One of the strengths of this publication is the contribution of chapters from writers from around the globe. We have included input and contributions from authors from the United States as well as countries such as Australia, China, Czech Republic, Pakistan and Turkey. Additionally, a number of additional travel abroad destinations are covered by experienced faculty who share expertise and insights for trip development to destinations around the world. Readers will encounter well over a dozen international destinations within this publication.
We hope this book will serve as a source of information for those planning or administering study abroad programs. We seek to answer critical questions as we reflect on established practices. Thus, how are study abroad programs influencing educational practices? Study abroad programs are attracting an increasing number of students as they expand on American university campuses and at institutions around the world (Institute of International Education, 2012). For example, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports that the number of students enrolled in fields of study outside their country of citizenship has reached over 3.7 million and continues to increase yearly (OECD, 2011). Because study abroad programs typically offer first-hand experiences, they are likely to encourage participant reflection about cultural and language similarities and differences. For preservice educators in particular, this reflection is likely to involve thoughts about future teaching in regards to multiculturalism and linguistic diversity (Stewart & Talburt, 1999).

This text is informed by theory and research in teacher education which provides ample evidence that teachers’ beliefs about education in general and about multicultural issues in particular are often changed by first-hand experiences (Deering & Stanutz, 1995). Furthermore, due to the increasing number of English language learners in schools in the United States and around the world, there is an increasing demand for educators who are knowledgeable about the specific needs these students bring to the classroom (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006). Interacting with others during a travel abroad experience can help preservice teachers broaden cultural knowledge and gain deeper global perspectives (Cushner, 2009). The study abroad programs shared in the chapters that follow help readers as they plan experiential learning opportunities and prepare university students for work in multicultural and multilingual settings. The various chapters within this publication provide an overview of the essential literature related to studying abroad. The chapters also explore a wealth of research studies which unveil new knowledge and deepen our understanding of the value of travel abroad experiences. One specific area of focus throughout this work is supporting educators to build expertise in the classroom.

How can educators support students as they develop the skills necessary for meeting the needs of their diverse communities? One way is through thoughtful curriculum development that recognizes the benefits of lived experiences abroad on student development. This text takes a practical look at study abroad experiences and how they can be used across a variety of disciplines to enhance curriculum and serve as an innovative force in the classroom. Study abroad includes participation in educational activities, courses, internships and externships in settings outside ones’ own country. This publication will frame study abroad programs within the context of the move toward understanding internationalization and globalization and the benefit of rich, lived experiences in diverse settings for educators. The text will also focus on how study abroad can serve as a vehicle for curriculum innovation in teacher education programs across different content area disciplines.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK**

This book is organized into three key sections. The first section entitled, “Study Abroad Foundations” explores the foundational knowledge and background information needed for those individuals developing study abroad programs. The second section entitled, “Curriculum Innovation and Change” describes examples of study abroad programs focused on teacher education and language learning. This section
also provides information for those concentrating efforts at the university level. The final section of the book identifies the benefits and challenges in planning and implementing study abroad programs. The book offers seventeen different chapters for readers interested in enhancing their study abroad programming. A brief description of each chapter follows below:

Chapter 1 describes a well-established study abroad for education majors in Italy. This chapter describes how faculty might develop and lead a short-term study abroad program.

Chapter 2 discusses how to best integrate international experiences into the curricular development process for educators working in teacher preparation programs. The authors explain the various models which may be used when planning a study abroad experience.

Chapter 3 outlines the development, design, implementation, and impact of an international initial field experience for preservice teachers in a Pacific/Asian Islander school in New Zealand. Strategies for initiating opportunities for similar models, extending the experience into student teaching, and collaborating with in-service teachers are provided.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of key factors for high-impact teacher education programs abroad, particularly short-term faculty-led programs. Challenges faced by such programs and strategies proposed for fostering successful faculty-led programs including discussion of concerns regarding sustainability, curriculum integration, partnerships, student engagement, career integration, and safety and security are shared.

Chapter 5 describes how study abroad programs offer an ideal context in which teachers-in-training can learn about intercultural communication and different patterns of culturally-based behavior. This chapter provides an in-depth look at intercultural learning programs and courses developed and implemented by a variety of U.S. universities and study abroad organizations.

Chapter 6 studies preservice teachers’ blog reflections about working in an Italian classroom and living with a host family during a four-week study abroad program in Northern Italy. The chapter describes preservice teachers’ reflections on making sense of educational and cultural differences, experiences as Italian language learners, and opportunities for professional and personal growth.

Chapter 7 poses an innovative framework that can be utilized as a model for study abroad experiences, particularly those situated in developing countries (such as Malawi). The model enhances a service learning structure by grounding both classroom study and related field work in the theoretical foundations of critical pedagogy, transformational learning theory, ecological systems theory and critical theory in a manner that sets the stage for study abroad success.

Chapter 8 is descriptive study involving three experienced literacy educators who travelled to Guatemala to conduct professional development workshops with preservice and in-service teachers. The purpose of the research was for the educators to reflect on their own practice and to investigate the impact of this international teaching experience on their beliefs and practices about literacy education.

Chapter 9 includes a faculty led study abroad program implemented in Puerto Rico. This short-term study abroad model highlights both design and implementation strategies for travel abroad including providing unique cultural and linguistic experiences.

Chapter 10 describes how to design and implement an innovative study abroad curriculum within teacher education departments. The curriculum (which includes problem-solving scenarios) is designed to include content which meets the specific needs of prospective study abroad student teachers of English, and to better meet the possible challenges that might result from participation.
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Chapter 11 provides tips for leading a study abroad course from a professor who taught a class focused on supporting language learners in five different countries. The chapter describes how the faculty members conducted a two-week study abroad program four times, each time in a different country in order to include the International Literacy Association’s World and European Conferences.

Chapter 12 illustrates how study abroad experiences can become a key component of an adult learning program to prepare individuals for the ever-changing workforce of the world.

Chapter 13 reviews the context and characteristics for international summer programs in leading Chinese universities. The significant role these programs play in designing an innovative learning platform are described. Trends on curriculum design and implementation are analyzed.

Chapter 14 presents a context for study abroad experiences and suggests how they can provide students with a deeper appreciation of issues such as internationalization and globalization. The chapter explores ways in which study abroad participants can be assisted to engage more fully with the experiences that they encounter abroad particularly for business educators.

Chapter 15 investigates how study abroad can have a powerful, transformative effect in either a positive or negative manner on students. University students who study abroad, return home changed. Very quickly students learn that there are different versions of reality in this world. This author explores the transformative process of clinical experiences abroad in Uganda, looking at the impact on teacher candidates.

Chapter 16 pragmatically doubts the benefits of study abroad within international teacher education by exploring the ideological challenges of study abroad through a postglobal lens. The authors challenge the dominant ideology of neoliberalism and recommend a focus on human experience and local history when examining cross-cultural experiences.

Chapter 17 discusses when students return from their study abroad programs and describes how they often feel distress, experience anxiety, and have cultural identity confusion. This study uses a large public university in Pakistan to determine what kinds of resources are available to study abroad students and the role these resources play in helping students with feelings of reentry shock. The study also provides suggestions to assist in culturally ambiguous situations.

REFERENCES


