

At a recent conference I attended, a colleague stated that there was no education abroad research being conducted. In effect, he argued, we were a field without a research base to guide our program design and management. I heartily disagreed, countering that the field is producing an unprecedented amount of research of various types representing a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. The challenge, I said, was to expand our view of what we consider study abroad “research” to be. We work in a complex field that encompasses a tremendous range of issues and topics that invite analyses from multiple disciplines. Our challenge is more one of keeping up with reviewing all of this research, and finding the time to analyze it and use it to improve programming.

This present volume of *Frontiers*, the nineteenth since the journal’s first volume was published in 1995, contains research that education abroad professionals can use to consider how best to inform decisions about program administration, pedagogies, and curricula. For example, in the lead article by Vande Berg, Paige, and Connor-Linton, the results of one of the most comprehensive projects ever to assess study abroad learning outcomes, “The Georgetown Consortium Project,” the authors suggest that the results point education abroad in the direction of designing and managing “structured interventions” that promote intercultural and target language learning in study abroad. The results from this landmark study will be cited for many years to come.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of *Frontiers*, Stephanie Evan’s provides another perspective on education abroad through a scholarly review of African American women who have been influenced by study abroad. Her article, “African American Women Scholars and International Research: Dr. Anna Julia Cooper’s Legacy of Study Abroad,” details how Dr. Anna Julia Cooper as well as other prominent women were both impacted by study abroad and how they in turn impacted others. This historical research not only gives greater meaning and significance to the work of education abroad professionals by documenting these compelling stories, but also inspires the field to seek to expand access to study abroad for underrepresented students. Moreover, Evans presents practical ways in which she has designed and led her own study abroad programs utilizing her research, and in doing so helps us to think about how we might conduct similar kind of research that can inform our programming.

Other articles in this volume serve the same purpose of providing research that informs education abroad programming. Five articles present research studies that examine study abroad outcomes, a fast-growing area of education abroad research. These include two studies that use a new instrument for assessing global learning called the Global Perspectives Inventory, or GPI

(Braskamp, Braskamp and Merrill; and Doyle); a study of intercultural knowledge and competence in science students who study abroad (Bender, Wright and Lopatto); research on the influence that language courses taken prior to short-term study abroad (Duperron and Overstreet); and a study by Purdue University faculty and graduate students (Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, and Wang) of how preservice teachers participating in study abroad experience and interpret race, ethnicity, class and gender issues.

*Frontiers* has always encouraged research into the nature and purposes of study abroad, and in this volume a number of authors present theoretical perspectives to advance our thinking about and practice of study abroad. Fred Dervin's provocative analysis of how we conceive of study abroad is based on his research on European (especially Finnish) student mobility. Readers will find that his "proteophilic model" of intercultural competencies covers familiar ground but in ways that push us to examine our practices anew. Martha Johnson conducts a "post" analysis of study abroad and in doing so reminds us that the world is a complex place that challenges both study abroad students and those who develop and manage programs. She helps us to identify our inherent biases so that we may redefine the ways we design and deliver our study abroad programs. Tracy Williams presents the reflective model of intercultural competency in her article, which offers a qualitative approach to assessment that is built into several structures of the three stages (pre-departure, abroad, returned) of the study abroad experience. Pagano and Roselle describe their experiential education model as a means to improve study abroad learning, one that views student intellectual development as a process that ideally moves from reflection to critical thinking to a final stage of what they describe as "refraction." Another theoretical approach to study abroad is provided by Reilly and Senders in their proposal of what they call "critical study abroad." They argue that study abroad as a field needs to reevaluate its assumptions in light of the global challenges that we face, and they propose several reference points for doing so. Finally, Sonesson and Cordano use universal design theory to encourage the re-design of study abroad programs in order to provide more effective access to a greater number of students.

Yet another form of research that has frequently appeared in *Frontiers* is represented in articles by John Lucas and William Moseley: perspectives from resident directors and faculty. Formerly resident director of the IES Abroad Barcelona Program, Lucas presents and analyzes case studies that together explore important topics and issues related to the mental health of students who study abroad. Both on-site and campus-based staff alike will appreciate the

insights offered in this article. A faculty member at Macalester College, Moseley draws on his experience leading a study abroad program as a pre-tenured faculty member to present a case study of how study abroad opportunities may be leveraged to support the research goals of junior faculty. Faculty with an interest in study abroad, deans and provosts, and study abroad directors will find Moseley's article useful for considering how pre-tenured faculty may become involved in study abroad programming and at the same time meet the demands of institutional research requirements.

Fourteen years ago, in my introduction to the first *Frontiers* volume, I wrote: "As we set out across the frontiers that have defined study abroad we cross into uncharted territory, but with a purpose that defines our path... the journey of encountering the frontiers of our field." Since its founding *Frontiers* has remained true to this original purpose of seeking to expand our research approaches to and perspectives on study abroad. This current volume represents well how far the field of study abroad has come, and future volumes will no doubt take us further.

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