

# Introduction

The history of this journal in many respects reflects the field of study abroad over the past seven years. *Frontiers* was founded to fill a void: to publish research that focuses on the content and substance of international education rather than the processes, logistics, and administrative aspects of our work. The first few years of this journal's history were lean ones; subscriptions numbered somewhere around 200, and the number of manuscripts submitted for publication were few and far between. Today, as international educators focus more attention on the many issues related to student learning, *Frontiers* enjoys a much wider circulation that exceeds one thousand copies per issue, and the quality of our manuscript submissions improves with each volume.

This current volume is our seventh to date. In it we offer a provocative blend of articles on a number of important study abroad topics. Terry Hannigan's lead article on "The Effect of Work Abroad Experiences on Career Development for U.S. Undergraduates" is a first step towards assessing the outcomes of overseas practical experiences. Hannigan breaks new ground here in attempting to evaluate whether working in another culture has benefits in increasing vocational self-concept crystallization and work commitment.

In their article entitled "Towards Reconciliation in the Motherland: Race, Class, Nationality, Gender, and the Complexities of American Student Presence at the University of Ghana, Legon," David Chioni Moore and Jennifer Landau describe and analyze the complex dynamics inherent in an African study abroad setting. Their study offers important insights that help us understand the many perspectives and interactions that are a part of study abroad landscapes.

Robert Winston's "Discipline and Interdiscipline: Approaches to Study Abroad" argues for the value and unique learning benefits of a study abroad course sequence designed and taught by a faculty resident director. Winston describes and analyzes the interdisciplinary learning about and "sophisticated self-consciousness" of the host culture that such a course imparts to students.

In his "Novices in the Field: Filling in the Meaning Continuum," Matthew Richard examines another approach to study abroad: the anthropological field school. Drawing on the insights of Josef Mestenhauser and his own observations of and interviews with his Belizean field school students, Richard dissects the cognitive mechanics of intercultural learning and suggests what precise cognitive skills students develop.

Addressing still another type of study abroad program, Paul Foster relates the details of a language and culture course in China that provides a model for short-term intensive abroad programs of this type. Foster's "A Language and Cultural Practicum Course in Nanjing: Maximizing the Students' Use of Chinese" describes the interplay of class work and practicum activities that engage students in a wide range of learning modalities.

Finally, Satya Pattnayak provides a review of a text on Latin America that echoes the issues addressed in our previous volume of *Frontiers*, which focused on area studies, globalization, and study abroad (*Frontiers*, Winter 2000).

Our next volume of *Frontiers*, due out in the fall of 2002, will focus on "Experiential Education and Study Abroad." Guest editors for this volume include Linda Goff (Marymount University), Bill Nolting (University of Michigan), Chip Peterson (University of Minnesota), and Rhoda

Borcherding (Pomona College). An outline of the articles for this special issue is available on our website, [www.frontiersjournal.com](http://www.frontiersjournal.com), as well as electronic versions of all of our back issues.

I want to take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to the thirteen institutional sponsors of *Frontiers*. The support of these institutions provides an academic grounding as well as the financial means to publish the journal. I want also to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of the *Frontiers* Editorial Board, especially the founding members.

Finally, on behalf of the Board and the Sponsors of *Frontiers*, I want to thank you, our subscribers, for helping us to sustain our efforts to encourage and disseminate international education research.

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