

Perspectives on Experiential Education

This Special Issue of *Frontiers* is timely. Over the past ten to fifteen years, the field of education abroad has seen a dramatic increase in the number and variety of experiential approaches to learning. While it has long been recognized that the learning outcomes of study abroad are closely related to out-of-class experiences, until recently surprisingly little attention had been paid to this topic. This volume seeks to address this need by inviting some of the leaders in the theory and practice of experiential education abroad to address important considerations related to their work.

Like other Special Issues of *Frontiers*, this volume is meant to bridge a gap between the administration of study abroad programs and the academic disciplines from which study abroad programs emanate. *Frontiers* has as one of its central purposes connecting study abroad to its academic underpinnings and to the faculty that teach and research within these disciplines. In addressing the topic of experiential education, we hope to engage our faculty in further study and dialogue about how best to create, manage, and evaluate experiential education programming in study abroad in order to enhance learning outcomes. The current volume also bridges another gap, this one between study abroad professionals and our colleagues involved in experiential education. Past Special Issues of *Frontiers* have looked at the intersection of key fields related to study abroad: science and engineering; foreign languages; and area studies. By addressing the theoretical, pedagogical and practical connections between international education and experiential education, it is our hope that this volume will spur discussion and collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

The featured articles in this volume move from theory and history to praxis and the concrete issues that we encounter in our everyday work. The introductory essay by Lynn Montrose of Regis University provides a framework for understanding the theory and pedagogy of experiential education. After a brief review of some experiential education theorists, Montrose outlines the standards of good practice, and helps us to think about how to

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define experiential education goals and means of assessment.

Rather than an historical overview of experiential education, this special issue of *Frontiers* offers case studies that relate individuals to their political and historical contexts. Ronald Cluett, a professor of Classics at Pomona College, shows how movement across borders is an often-repeated narrative that blends the personal and the political. His historical case studies, ranging in subject from Cicero to Mohammed Atta, remind us that experiential education is an old form that has influenced history in tangible ways, both positively and negatively.

The next article, by Ann Lutterman-Aguilar and Orval Gingerich, examines the ways in which international experiential education contributes to educating for global citizenship. Drawing on their well-known program at Augsburg College, Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich argue that study abroad in and of itself does not contribute to the development of global citizenship, but that it can do so when study abroad programs are designed with that goal in mind. The authors provide suggestions for how to design such programs by drawing on the principles of experiential education and their own experience at Augsburg. Following this piece, John Annette provides readers with a broad view of the area of international service learning, based on his expertise.

The next series of articles frame the “how to” of this Special Issue by offering best practices from practitioners on the front line of study abroad experiential programming. These articles cover internships, field-based learning, and collaborative learning using journal writing. The first article is by Gerald Honigsblum, Director of the Boston University Paris Internship Program. Honigsblum outlines the material, cultural, intellectual, legal, and professional issues associated with a professional internship model. His article analyzes the conditions and variables of experiential learning within internship programs, and recommends a number of guidelines and strategies to make the internship a seamless learning experience that is both substantial and substantive.

Carol Brandt and Thomas Manley present the practice of using a fieldbook on study abroad programs as both a pedagogical and assessment tool. They provide specific examples of how the fieldbook is used to engage students in certain types of learning activities, as they elucidate both the successes and the problems with this approach. Experiential education requires rigorous reflective and analytical structures, and the fieldbook is an exam-

ple of an effective model for achieving this goal.

Leeann Chen of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University provides an innovative model for incorporating host nationals as cross-cultural collaborators in overseas learning. Chen proposes to have students write for a native audience, creating opportunities for students to reflect more deeply on cultural differences from cross-cultural points of view. Her article examines the experiential links created within a creative dialogic relationship rather than the traditional appositive relationship that exists between students and hosts. She also addresses how to prepare both host nationals and students for using writing addressed to the former as a structure of cross-cultural collaborative learning.

The next article of this Special Issue examines experiential education abroad models. Chip Peterson of the University of Minnesota argues that program design and pedagogical strategies are critical to transformative experiential education. He compares and contrasts three different approaches to program design, management, and evaluation. The many similarities among them reflect the common values, objectives, and principles of good practice on which they draw; the notable differences among them illustrate that there are many valid pedagogies.

In his article, Michael Steinberg of the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) addresses the question of maintaining academic quality in experiential study abroad programming. He demonstrates that experiential education is a laudable and creditworthy endeavor, and discusses some approaches designed to reinforce the academic nature of experiential learning, using IES as a case study. Steinberg reviews recent research on credit acceptance and on student learning, and then discusses assessment and the nature of academic programming for students in field placements, internships, and service learning.

Finally, we include in this volume tributes to two giants in the field of experiential education abroad who passed away within the past year, Senator Paul Wellstone and Howard Berry. We are pleased also to be able to publish a bibliography of Howard Berry's writings as well as a short article of his that appeared in *Transitions Abroad*. We thank Clay Hubbs of *Transitions* for granting permission to reprint the article and the tributes to Howard Berry. We thank also Amy Sunderland, Executive Director of the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA), for her moving tribute to Senator Wellstone. Both Wellstone and Berry were influential leaders in

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promoting and developing international experiential education, and we are pleased to be able to honor their memory in this Special Issue of *Frontiers*.

Readers will notice a page dedicated to notes from the Forum on Education Abroad. *Frontiers* is pleased to be a strategic partner of the Forum by sharing the research goals of the organization. The Forum and *Frontiers* will work together on future projects to benefit the field of international education. Already being planned are special issues of *Frontiers* developed in collaboration with Forum members whose topics include outcomes assessment and curriculum development. In addition, the *Frontiers* Editorial Board is pleased to distribute complimentary copies of *Frontiers* to all Forum members.

Study abroad professionals are challenged to design, manage, and assess all aspects of experiential education programs, often in a climate in which these programs themselves are not well understood. The guest editors and the editorial board of *Frontiers* hope that this Special Issue will contribute to the work of our colleagues by offering insight into critical topics, and by providing concrete ideas and tools for engaging in this work. It is a beginning, and we hope one that will assist study abroad professionals to think through the ways in which experiential learning influences study abroad learning.

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