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Passport to change is an apt title for this book. While the long subtitle tells what the book is about, the title piques curiosity. Passport implies going abroad. Is the title saying studying abroad brings change? Perhaps it is more. A passport is the most important document we must carry when travelling abroad. It represents who we are and allows us to cross boundaries. This book itself then may serve as a passport that is intended to guide the designing of a sound faculty-led study abroad program that is transformative for students and faculty.

Hilary Landorf states in the Foreword to the book that it is a “much needed practical guide that covers the nuts and bolts of short-term faculty-led study abroad programs” (p. ix). This is a fair observation. There is rich literature on study abroad, addressing a wide range of topics: how to integrate study abroad into the undergraduate curriculum (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009); the role of study abroad in fostering global citizenship in higher education (Lewin, 2010); assessment (Savicki, Brewer, & Whalen, 2015); and re-examination and re-designing of student learning (Vande Berg, Page, & Lou, 2012) to name a few. Each contributes to advancing the pedagogy and praxis of study abroad. None, however, provide a practical, comprehensive guide for developing and implementing faculty-led short-term study abroad programs – the programs that account for much of the growth in study abroad activities in higher education in the United States (Gregorio, 2015). This collection of essays by the faculty with extensive experience with the subject, clearly fills the gap in the literature.

The book consists of three parts. PART ONE includes a chapter that presents foundational information about designing and delivering faculty-led study abroad programs. Robert Cole explains six touchpoints of an iterative program development process – designing the program, determining logistics abroad, preparing the budget, seeking approval, marketing and populating the program, and faculty groundwork for teaching abroad. The figure of the process included in the chapter serves as an accessible concept map showing the touchpoints and the relationship between them. Each touchpoint is explained succinctly but with emphasis on important considerations. The chapter provides a concise survey of all aspects of a faculty-led short-term study abroad program, laying the foundation for more detailed discussions of these aspects in the following chapters.

PART TWO contains eight chapters that offer conceptual and practical guides for designing the curriculum at three stages of study abroad programs: preparation, experience, and return. If Chapter 1 is about the what of designing a program, Chapter 2 orient the reader to the how or the principles of academically sound, culturally relevant curriculum in all stages. Academically sound curriculums, Susan Lee Pasquarelli argues, are experiential and constructivist. Using real examples, she walks the reader through Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle – experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting – and the ways to foster student development of metacognition, or thinking about thinking, about the knowledge and skills they are acquiring through study abroad. Culturally relevant curriculum must have course work relevant to the field site and provide opportunities for developing intercultural awareness and intercultural competence. Guided reflection and outcome-based assessment are also described as essential components of an academically sound, culturally relevant curriculum. Chapter 3 describes how to incorporate reflection into faculty-led short-term study abroad programs. Victor Savicki and Michele Price share relevant research findings and their implications, principles to keep in mind, and methods of reflection from journaling and critical incident reporting to role-playing and art. In Chapter 4, Darla Deardorff introduces the reader to the principles and steps of designing and assessing an outcome-based program. Learning in study abroad has academic, intercultural, and personal growth dimensions. For each dimension, Deardorff shares a series of questions faculty should ask themselves to ensure the alignment across activities, learning outcomes, and assessment.

In Chapter 5, Bilge Gökham Çelik, Dale Leavitt, and Michael Scully, professors from
three different disciplines (construction management, journalism, and marine sciences), guide the reader through developing an interdisciplinary program. Rather than offering guidelines, they use their experience of developing a sustainability-focused interdisciplinary program in Turkey. Several aspects of touchpoints of the program development process surveyed in Chapter 1 such as site selection, content development, participant selection, and logistic challenges are illustrated in this example. In Chapter 6, Paul Webb and Brian Wysor describe designing a field-intensive study abroad, using their experiences of offering marine biology in Panama and tropical ecology in Belize. Much like Chapter 5, this chapter walks the reader through several program design touchpoints – the site choice, the length, the credits earned, student selection, and the activities before, during, and after study abroad, the assessment details, and logistical challenges. In both chapters, while the situations described are specific to the programs and localities, the authors provide generalizable insights into what considerations need to be made at various touchpoints.

In Chapter 7, Autumn Quezada de Tavarez and Lerro Staroscik Warren describe a faculty-led public health service-learning program in El Salvador. The chapter outlines ideas of experiential education, community engagement, and international education and discusses guiding principles, learning outcomes, activities, and assessment. The table illustrating learning outcomes and activities side by side is particularly helpful for those new to faculty-led study abroad programs and even to service-learning in general. Also noteworthy is the assessment they conducted with students a few years after the program, which allowed them a glimpse of the strong impact the program had on them. In Chapter 8, Candelas Gaia and Javier Garcia Garrido narrate their experience of designing summer study abroad internship courses in Salamanca, Spain. They cover site selection, curriculum, prerequisites, assessments and other areas of course development as well as challenges they faced in the process. Because an internship is not faculty-led, designing it is much different from other types of short-term faculty-led study abroad programs described in this book. It becomes clear that an on-site coordinator is essential to a successful internship abroad. Chapter 9 by Min Zhou describes a cultural emersion program in China for students without prior Chinese language knowledge. It was designed to fulfill a requirement for a Chinese minor or for an elective in a variety of disciplines. The chapter covers learning outcomes, pre-departure preparations, cultural experiences in China, program challenges, and brief post-trip anecdotes illustrating the impact of the program. While the chapter does not offer a sense of day-to-day activities of the program, Zhou richly details the kinds of cultural immersion and resulting adaptations her students had to make in communicating, getting around, and living in a culturally different environment.

PART THREE covers the program development touchpoints that receive less attention but are critical to designing a successful program. Chapter 10 by Michael Tyson focuses on program marketing and presents the marketing principle of the four Ps (product, place, promotion and price) in the context of a faculty-led study abroad. The chapter is an instructive guide for each of the Ps. Chapter 11 by Susan Lee Pasquarelli addresses faculty groundwork to be done before, during, and after study abroad. The chapter offers succinct, concrete advice on how to prepare and guide students pedagogically, culturally, and linguistically to make the best out of the short-term experience. The materials that the author developed such as a packing guide and an identification card also serve as handy resources for the reader. Finally, Chapter 12 by Rozanne O’Connell addresses perception – how we are perceived abroad and how we may engage the perception to advance intercultural understanding. Using real examples, O’Connell alerts the reader to pay attention to taken for granted aspects of our life such as time, space, food, and cultural norms and encourages learning from the locals about the appropriate ways of conduct.

There are many things to appreciate about this book. First and foremost, this is a practical guide. By the end of the book, you have a clear idea about the steps required for designing a faculty-led study abroad program and what precisely needs to be addressed in each step. Second, the book covers varied types of program from general cultural and language immersion to fieldwork to internships to service-learning. It also samples programs developed in and across disciplines from the humanities to the sciences. These diversities allow the reader to imagine many possibilities of faculty-led study abroad. Third, each chapter is short and rich in real examples; this makes the book an enjoyable and useful handbook.

Passport to change appeals to any reader who is interested in leading a short-term
study abroad course. Faculty who have never designed such a program will benefit most from the book. For veteran faculty, the book serves as an informative resource for enhancing and improving their programs. The book also serves as a valuable resource for the international program offices in higher education.

References


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