



# Preparing to Study Abroad: Learning to Cross Cultures

*Steven T. Duke*

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## **Preparing to Study Abroad: Learning to Cross Cultures** Steven T. Duke

A Student Text to Build Cultural Sensitivity, Confidence and Openness to the Experience of Study Abroad

"I highly recommend that college students include a well-planned and rigorous international immersion experience in their college curriculum. This book makes an excellent starting place for embarking on this vital transformative journey."—Steven S. Reinemund, Dean, Wake Forest University School of Business and Retired Chairman/CEO PepsiCo

"It's important that you, as a student in today's world, ask yourself, 'Am I prepared to go beyond borders? To leave my comfort zone?' You're reading this book, so I can only assume you are. Good for you—the business world needs talented individuals, those who take the initiative to expand their mind-set and leadership style and see the world through a broader lens."—Ken Bouyer, Director of Inclusiveness Recruiting, Ernst & Young, LLP

Study abroad is a potentially valuable experience in today's global economy. With proper preparation it can be transformational.

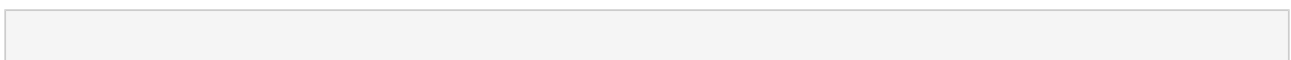
It can open you to the appreciation of other cultures; develop the transferable intercultural skills for interacting with people from different backgrounds; and deepen your self-awareness about your values and expectations. It can build confidence as you learn to navigate unfamiliar situations, and help you deal with the ambiguities of life.

Study abroad also develops knowledge and insights about our interconnected world that will serve you well whether you choose a career in business, non-profits, education, or government. A recent study by IES Abroad found that many employers value the intercultural skills and personal development that students gain from their travel. Students who had studied abroad reported higher starting salaries and were more likely to have landed a job within six months of graduation than the national average.

This book is written for you, as a student who is learning about the world first-hand, and probably traveling abroad for the first time. It addresses the challenges of adapting thinking and behavior as you travel in an unfamiliar environment, of making the most of the opportunities, and of meeting and interacting with the locals.

This book is designed to help you prepare for your study abroad experience so you can get the most from it, and gain critical intercultural skills while crossing cultures. It offers strategies for learning about and exploring cultural differences and similarities of the country you will visit; and advice about how to actively observe and participate in the life of the locality in which you will find yourself. Each chapter illustrates key concepts through the personal accounts of students who have "been there, done that."

This book aims to help you with your own personal journey, and to make your study abroad experience as meaningful, rewarding, and insightful as possible.



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