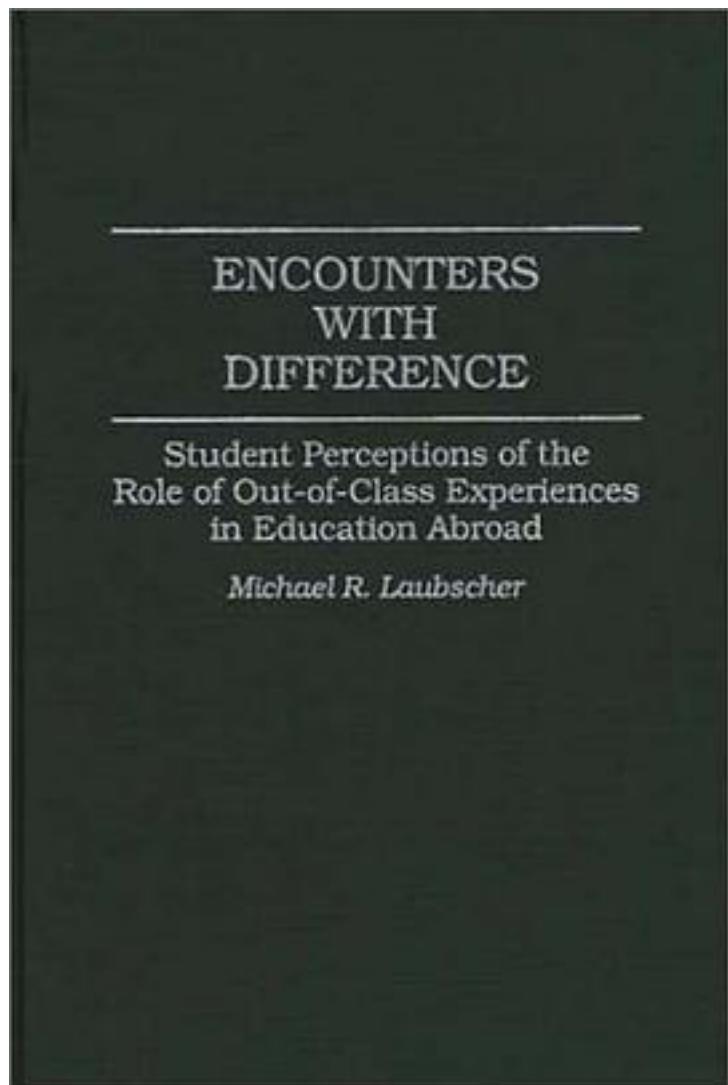


Encounters with Difference



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著者:Michael R. Laubscher

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Laubscher explores how students use their out-of-class time to enhance their learning about cultural differences while enrolled in a formal academic program abroad. Taxonomic analysis of the interview data using the means/end semantic relationship postulated by James Spradley supports the hypothesis that, when left to their own devices, students abroad naturally employ ethnographic methods to learn about the host culture. This suggests that students abroad will gain more from the out-of-class domain if that domain includes programmed opportunities for participant observation and personal interaction and if the students have the skills and guidance to capitalize upon those opportunities fully. The students' detailed discussions of their activities and experiences provide insights upon which educators can base their development of a programmatic approach to making the noncurricular dimension of education abroad a more integral part of the overall learning process. By combining ethnographic method with the principles of experiential learning, students abroad can reconceptualize the world around them and gain a greater appreciation of the existence of cultural differences in a multicultural world.

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