



## A Serendipitous Experience

**S**TUDENTS WHO VENTURE FORTH on study abroad want to see the world, develop greater independence, often (if they are honest and we are too), to simply get away from whatever traps or stagnation they are caught in at home.

They gain all of that and so much more. This picture, taken in the Jardin de Luxembourg in Paris, shows two of my students reading the poetry of Jim Barnes together, aloud.

I love this picture because to me it captures the power of poetry to convey a poet's observation or thought in such a way that we are at least momentarily transfixed—and sometimes changed forever.

Some of my students take my course because they love literature and they relish the idea of reading wonderful things written about Paris

in Paris. Others sign up because they want to go to Paris, and my course is offered in English. Sadly, somewhere along the way, many of these students have been turned off to the power and beauty of literature, especially poetry and don't see its relevance to their lives. Happily, when they are exposed to it in a way that makes it come alive all around them, many of them are empowered to become the kind of people for whom literature can deepen and enrich life wherever they happen to live it.

For them this may be an unintended outcome of studying abroad—it's serendipitous. For me, it's anything but unintended.

### **JANET HULSTRAND**

Education Abroad Consultant and Adjunct Faculty  
Queens College, CUNY

**YOU'RE INVITED!** We invite you to submit your photos along with a brief (approximately 200 words) description of why these images are important in your understanding of a person, place, idea, or incident from your experiences in international education. The photos could be of a simple moment on your home campus involving international students, a major event in an exotic location, or anything in between. The editors of *International Educator* will run selections on this page throughout the year. Please contact us for submission details at [elainal@nafsa.org](mailto:elainal@nafsa.org).