

Transitions: Survive or Thrive?



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Transition – Making Moves

“Transitions can be keenly anticipated or feared. They can be stepping stones to maturity and new stages of life or they can be fraught with uncertainty and inconclusiveness and laced with pain.”

‘A TCP String of Five Pearls,’ William D. Taylor, *Interact*, Dec. 1994

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Talking Points

- ❖ The normal stages students and families experience in any transition, including re-entry.
- ❖ Strategies for dealing with transitions.
- ❖ Learning from past transitions, dealing with present ones, and preparing to effectively manage future transitions.

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Write down one effective strategy for helping students/families in transition?

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Here we go...AGAIN!



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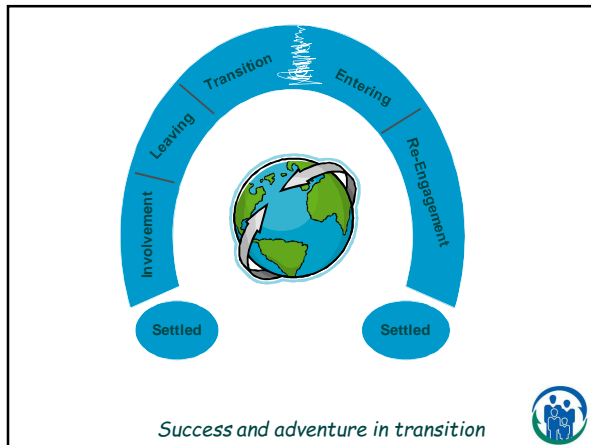


Why Does Mobility Matter?

- ❖ What creates “high mobility” in an international lifestyle?
- ❖ Other factors that create “high mobility”.
- ❖ What is the result of “high mobility”?

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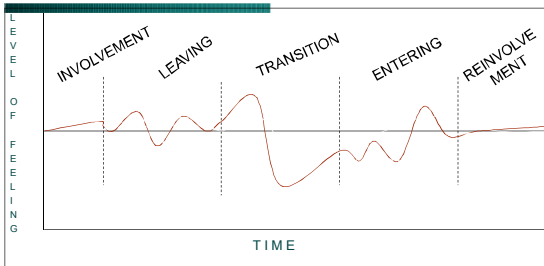




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Emotional Side of Transition Cycle



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Involvement

- ❖ **Social Status** → **Belonging**
(how people are perceiving you)
- ❖ **Social Posture** → **Commitment**
(how you see yourself in relationship to other people)
- ❖ **Psychological Experience** → **Intimacy**
(what's going on inside your head & heart)

Adapted from "The Third Culture Kid Experience", Pollock and VanReken, 1999 and "Transitions and TCKs", Jean Larsen, 1998

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Leaving

- ❖ **Social Status** → **Separating**
 - Loosening of emotional ties
- ❖ **Social Posture** → **Disengaging**
 - Distancing from others
 - Relinquishing responsibilities
- ❖ **Psychological Experience** → **Conflicted**
 - Mixture of celebrations, anticipation versus sadness, denial

Adapted from "The Third Culture Kid Experience", Pollock and VanReken, 1999 and "Transitions and TCKs", Jean Larsen, 1998

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Transition

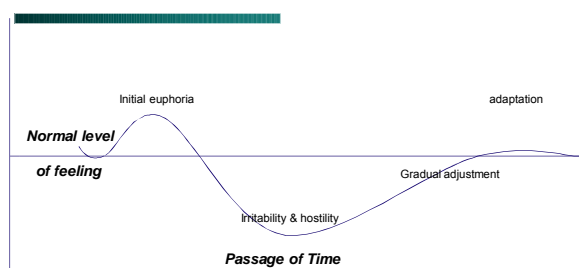
- ❖ **Social Status** → **Unknown**
 - No status, reputation, structure - clueless
- ❖ **Social Posture** → **Chaos**
 - Exaggerated problems and responses to them
 - Misunderstandings, ambiguity
 - Self-centered, isolation
- ❖ **Psychological Experience** → **Anxiety**
 - Fearful, uncertain, emotional instability, disappointment

Adapted from "The Third Culture Kid Experience", Pollock and VanReken, 1999 and "Transitions and TCKs", Jean Larsen, 1998

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Culture Shock (Transition Shock)



Adapted from L. Robert Kohls, "Survival Kit for Overseas Living", 2001

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Entering

- ❖ **Social Status → Marginal**
 - Uncertain, tentative, searching mentors,
 - Fearful, easily offended
- ❖ **Social Posture → Introducing**
 - Observing
 - Risk taking
 - Initiating relationships
- ❖ **Psychological Experience → Vulnerable**
 - Loss of self-esteem / self-confidence
 - Depression

Adapted from "The Third Culture Kid Experience", Pollock and VanReken, 1999 and "Transitions and TCKs", Jean Larsen, 1998

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Re-Involvement

- ❖ A position again of:
 - belonging,
 - Participation
 - Commitment
 - Feelings of security and intimacy

Adapted from "The Third Culture Kid Experience", Pollock and VanReken, 1999 and "Transitions and TCKs", Jean Larsen, 1998

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TRANSITION!!!



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Emotional Responses

❖ **What is normal?**

- Emotional Instability – happy days, blue (sad) days, crying
- Fearful / uncertain / isolation
- Loss of self-esteem / self-confidence
- Self-doubt
- Exaggerated problems and responses to them
- Ambiguity / misunderstandings / easily offended
- Anxiety / depression

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Emotional Responses

❖ **What is not normal?**

- Failure to move ahead (thrive)
- Paralyzed
- Live in the past
- Hard to get out of bed
- Difficulty completing course work
- Things that brought you joy no longer do
- Deep sadness that will not go away

DEPRESSION – need to seek professional help

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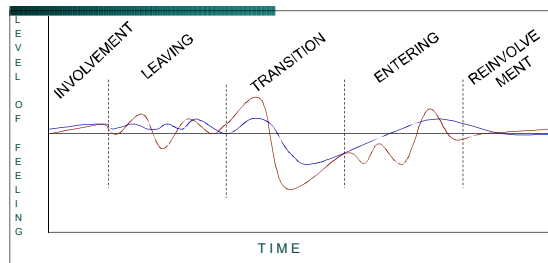
The Good News

- ❖ Research by the Interchange Institute for Prudential shows that expatriates who received cross-cultural training before or shortly after arriving in their host country had a better adjustment than those who did not receive training.

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Transition Cycle After Training



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How Global Mobility Affects Children

- ❖ High mobility lifestyle – brings about a lot of loss (tangible and hidden)
- ❖ Loss = Grief

“For most TCK’s the collection of significant losses and separations before the end of adolescence is often more than most people experience in a lifetime.”

Pollock and Van Reken, Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds, 2009

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How to Help Our Children

- ❖ Allow them to grieve
 - Confront the losses – name them
 - Spend time with them
 - Grieve over them
 - Come to closure
- ❖ Say proper good-byes
 - Helps bring closure

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Coming to Closure

- ❖ Leavers – Build RAFT
 - Reconciliation
 - Affirmation
 - Farewells
 - Think and Talk destination
- ❖ Stayers – Build PIER
 - Prepare to say good-bye
 - Identify special memories and places
 - Express feelings and engage in activities to meet new friends.
 - Remain open to new friendships

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Effective Strategies for Helping Students / Families in Transition

- ❖ Transition programs for incoming and outgoing students and their families
- ❖ Peer mentors
- ❖ Leaving rituals
- ❖ Stayer parties
- ❖ Letters to new school / to new student
- ❖ Regular check ins
- ❖ What else?

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How to Grow from the Transition Experience

- ❖ Consider how you/they have dealt with past transitions and how you can continue growing in future ones.
- ❖ Build on/with the skills of this mobile lifestyle
- ❖ Wherever you go in life unpack your bags and become a part of the experience.
- ❖ N.B.

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Happy Transitions!



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