

Transitioning Schools

Making a Smooth Transition



A Transition Booklet for Students Moving Schools
from the OIS Counselling Centre

**Osaka
International
School
of
Kwansei
Gakuin**



*Informed, Caring
Creative Individuals
Contributing to
a Global Community*

A Smoother Transition

One of the very hardest things about international living is moving... saying goodbye to friends, pets, and places that have been important to you. Although moving can be difficult, it doesn't have to be bad! Although some people may have lived in the same place for their whole life, others like you, have had the opportunity to live in different places. You've had a chance to meet people from different countries and cultures, tried different kinds of foods, learned a new language, interacted with teachers from around the world and made friends with people that you can keep in touch with for the rest of your life- no matter where you go!

Because of your experiences, you will look at the world differently- you will understand some world issues that other people your age may not yet understand. You may have a different perspective of what is important and what is not. You will not have to watch a TV program to learn about the wonders and challenges of life in Japan.

When moving, many students worry about how they will fare academically and socially when they move. Academically, you may find yourself either ahead or behind your schoolmates but you can be sure that your new school will help place you in the best grade or class to meet your needs. Socially, research shows that these adjustments can take a while, especially since you are older. It's helpful to remember that it may take a while to make friends, but rest assured, it will happen!



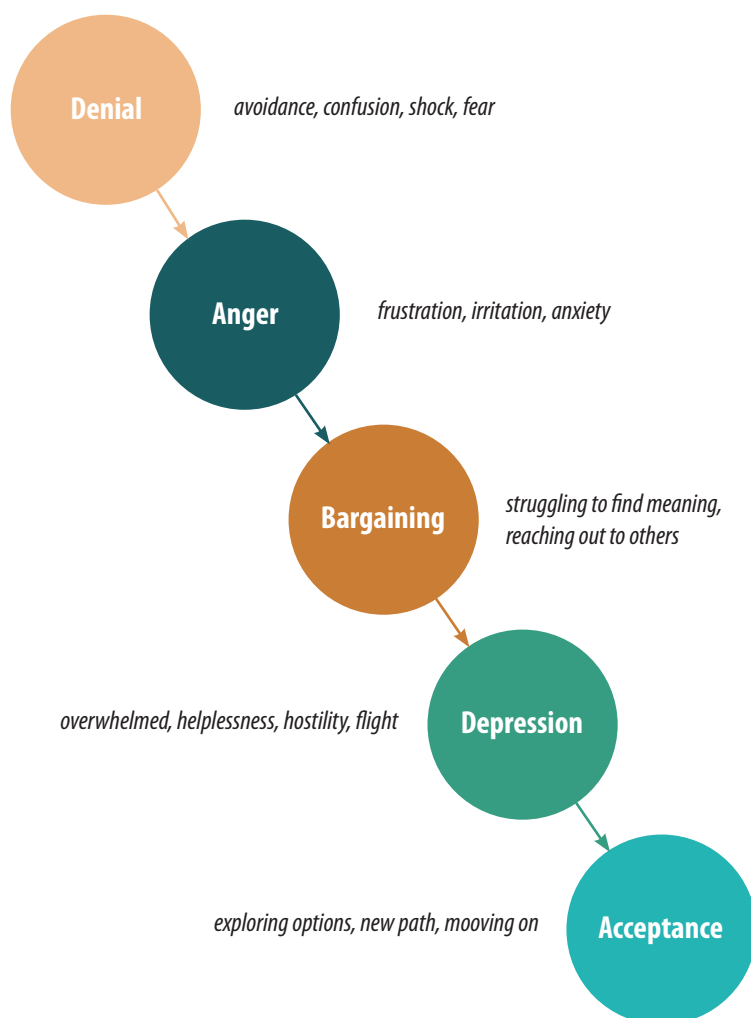
Since you have been educated internationally you may find that you may be missing key cultural reference points (unwritten rules) from your new environment even if this new environment is where you once called "home". You may have gone to Korea for the weekend, Thailand at Christmas or gone to Australia over break but do not know the rules to play rugby or where to get your lunch ticket at your new school's cafeteria. It takes a while to learn or relearn all the rules and ways of behaving, but this process can actually be a powerful growth experience

As the end of your time at OIS approaches, you can expect that the time will be stressful. The mixture of confusing feelings are common as you are about to leave your home, school and friends and move to a new place. You may find that you can feel excited, scared, sad, happy, anxious, angry, depressed, overwhelmed, and hopeful all in the same 2 minutes time! As frustrating as all of these feelings may feel, they are absolutely normal and we hope that this small pamphlet will be helpful in better understanding what's involved in the transition process.

Stages of Transition

The moment you learn that you will be leaving OIS, the transition process begins as you take on a new identity, that of a “leaver”. Along with the leaving, you are also in the midst of anticipating the transition into being an “arriver/newbie” with another set of stages to experience. Hopefully, knowing what both stages may include will help ease the confusion of what you might experience and feel. And remember, in both stages, people go through them at different times and at different rates. For some, the adjustment period can take weeks or months. There is no ‘right’ or ‘correct’ amount of time- whatever time you need is the right time for you to feel settled. Be aware that you may also go back and forth between stages. Be patient with yourself and the people and situations you encounter and don’t forget to keep your sense of humor!

As a “Leaver” the process of saying goodbye can look and feel similar to the feelings someone experiences when someone they love has died. It’s the sense of loss and possible grief that may come with hearing the news that “we’re moving”. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross has identified these five stages as:



Stages of Transition *(continued)*

As an “Arriver” (you may remember going through this when you first arrived in Japan):

1 Honeymoon Period

The strangeness is exciting. Everything is new, fun and interesting!

2 Culture Shock

The honeymoon is over! Nothing is going as it should. You may long for the old routines, friends, and the school you knew before. You miss being known and knowing what to do and how to do it! Patience is short. You may resist making the ‘effort’ to get into new things. You may feel sad, anxious, frustrated and want to go home. Although it’s normal to feel these feelings, it’s also important you don’t get ‘stuck’ in this stage. Be sure to talk to someone (parent, school counselor, and friend) to help you move through this stage- the sooner the better!

3 Adjustment

Frustration and resistance subsides. Acceptance and integration occur. You begin to feel ‘at home’ and life begins to make sense again. You know your school schedule by heart, you know what your teachers expect, you may even know your address and how to give directions to get there!

4 Adaptation

You feel known and accepted by people and are enjoying a sense of belonging to your home, friends, school and country. You find that there are people and places and things that you genuinely care about.

Leaving Well



In the book, *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. VanReken, the authors provide a widely used definition of a third culture kid, who is “a person who spends a significant part of his/her first eighteen years of life accompanying parent(s) into a country or countries that are different from at least one parents’ passport country(ies) due to a parent’s choice of work or advanced training.”

Leaving Well *(continued)*

The authors go on to explain the importance of leaving a place 'well' so that you are equipped to enter 'well'. They use the term **RAFT** to describe the four important steps.

R

Reconciliation - repair, restore, make peace with those you will be leaving. If there is someone that you have wronged or have wronged you, be sure to talk with them. This may be the most difficult step, but it is also the most important one! You don't want to leave on bad terms or with any unresolved issues.

A

Affirmation - letting people know that you love and appreciate them and thanking them for what they have meant to you.

F

Farewells - taking/making the time to say goodbye. Those who 'sneak out' and never say a proper goodbye often feel badly later in life. Although it may be painful, it is an important part of the transition process; not only for you, but also for the people you are leaving.

T

Thinking ahead - Be realistic about where you will be next and be ready to give the new place, school and people a chance. Check out your new school's website, learn about the country and culture and consider how you will be the best version of yourself!

Here is a small exercise to accompany each of the four steps that will hopefully guide you through the process of a successful RAFT launch!

R

Reconciliation

Who might you have hurt or been hurt by that you need to get reconciled with before moving on? Knowing how unhealthy it is to lug around the weight and burden of past hurts, think about what you can say/do to help facilitate forgiveness, righting a wrong, and/or acceptance. Jot down their names and what you might be able to do to forgive and be forgiven. (if you need help with this, please do not hesitate to talk to your parents, counselor, etc)

A

Affirmation

Thanking the people who have made a difference in your life- people who you care about and appreciate. These people may include your classmates, friends, teachers, school staff, coaches, instructors, neighbors, family friends, parents, siblings, other relatives, hairdresser, dentist, etc.

Leaving Well *(continued)*

Who? <i>Who do I want to thank?</i>	What? <i>What will I say or do?</i>	When? <i>When will I say or do this?</i>

How will you acknowledge what they have meant to you?

Ideas include:

- writing a letter
- sending them a card
- talking to them
- getting them a small gift
- having one last 'outing' together
- taking a picture of you together

F Farewells

Make a list of the people, places and possessions that you may have to say goodbye to. Be sure to plan a time to say your goodbyes to each of these groups and take lots of pictures!



T Think Destination

Turn your attention to the future, and prepare for the opportunities and challenges ahead of you.

- What are you 3 things you are most looking forward to?
- What questions might you have that would be helpful to find the answers to before you leave?
- What are you most concerned/worried about?
- What is one thing you can do now to make sure you enter well?

Online Resources

- **Around the World in a Lifetime:**
www.users.erols.com/fso/awal.html
- **Foreign Service Youth Foundation:**
www.state.gov/www/flo/fsyf.html
- **Global Nomads International:**
www.globalnomads.association.com
- **Global Nomads Virtual Village:**
www.gnvv.org
- **Overseas Brats:**
www.users.capu.net/~mcl/osb/osbmain.htm
- **Third Culture Kids:**
www.tckworld.com
- **World Weave:**
www.worldweave.com/GN.html
- **Tedx Talks:**
 - » Famous TCKs
 - » Don't ask me where I am from ask where I am a local
 - » Building Identity as a TCK
 - » Ruth VanReken

Publications

- Pollock, D.C. & VanReken, R.E., *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*
- Ota, D., *Safe Passages*
- Pascoe, R., *Raising Global Nomads: Parenting Abroad in an On-Demand World*
- Roman, B., *Footsteps around the World; Relocation Tips for Teens*
- Kohls, R., *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*

Acknowledgement

Much of the information from this pamphlet came directly or indirectly from the work of David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken, authors of *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*.

A digital copy of this booklet can be downloaded from the school website via the handbooks tab at <https://www.senri.ed.jp/osaka-international-school/school-life/counselling-center>



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