Going “Home”

A Guide to Surviving Re-Entry

Trainer’s Guide

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Training Program Design, Fall 2005

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Re-Entry Training

Background

Vella's Questions & Goals

Who: 80 (or fewer) "third culture kids" or "global nomads", high school seniors at an international school. (If the graduating class is over 80 students, divide it in half by availability or alphabetical by last name until each section is under 80 students, and perform a separate seminar for each half of the class.)

Why: Many TCKs or GNs experience moderate-to-severe re-entry shock, or "reverse culture shock" upon repatriation to their country of citizenship. For many of these kids, their country of citizenship is not particularly "home", yet they are expected to respond to it as though they were "returning home". A common time for this problem is when they graduate from high school and go to the "home" country for college or university.

When: This one-day workshop is required for seniors in participating high schools and is provided during the second semester of their senior year.

Where: Appropriate event space at or near the high school. Internet access is required (or helpful) for the afternoon.

What: Training on identity, re-entry culture shock, and coping strategies.

How: Activities including discussions, games, skits, lecture, small group work, written material, and information search.

Goals (What for?): By the end of this training, participants will have:

- Explored issues of identity, and specifically their own identity
- Defined and analyzed the W-curve of re-entry shock
- Heard/read anecdotes of TCK returnee experiences
- Developed coping strategies to minimize re-entry shock
- Assembled a "local survival kit" for the "home" culture

Context

These high school students are preparing to graduate. Most are moving on to college or university in their "home country", a country many of them have not lived in for many years, if at all. Many of them have chosen a college and made other practical preparations for re-entry, but have not considered the emotional and social difficulties they will be facing. Because these are all students from one class in a high school, it is assumed that they know each other. Were this workshop used for a group that was less familiar with each other, it would be important to add more getting-to-know-you icebreakers, such as having pairs interview and then introduce each other.

Needs assessment

A month before this seminar, seniors were asked to fill out the attached needs assessment.

Materials needed

Nametags (mostly for the benefit of the trainers)
Markers
Pens
Index cards
Flip charts
Flip chart stand
Worksheets (as included in packet)
Timer
Computers with Internet access

Agenda

Instructions for trainers are in italics for each section. An abbreviated agenda for workshop participants is included in the Training/Seminar Materials section.

Brief Introduction *9:30-9:45 AM*

Welcome
Introduce Purpose of Training

- Make it easier to transition to your country of citizenship
- Be aware of re-entry shock
- Have tools to cope

Introduce Trainers and Background
Ask participants to put on name tags

Icebreakers *9:45-10:15 AM*

Sociograms: 15 minutes

Tall to short
What languages do you speak?
Shoe size
Where you are going next?
Hair length

Do you like your neighbor?: 15 minutes

The group stands in a circle with room in the center. One person begins in the circle and says to an individual in the group, "_____, do you love your neighbor?" The individual pointed out can either say,
"Yes I like my neighbors _____ and _____, but I *really* like people _____ (wearing green, from England, etc.)"
or
"No, I do not like my neighbors _____ and _____."
If the individual uses the first phrase, all members of the group with that characteristic must find a new spot in the circle at least three spaces from they are standing. The person with no space (last person remaining) becomes the new caller.
If the individual uses the second phrase, his/her two "neighbors" must switch places with one another. The other group members move in quickly to close the spaces. The last of the two to make it to their new place becomes the caller.

Who Am I? *10:15 – 10:50 AM*

Introduction: 5 minutes

One of the major benefits of moving around the world, living in different countries, and having exposure to different cultures is that you develop a more open mind and an ability to adapt. The drawback that corresponds to that benefit is one of a fluid, and perhaps ill-defined, identity. Sometimes, we can have a hard time knowing who we are. Who are you? What characteristics do you use to define yourself? We're going to divide into groups to take a look at this.

Group brainstorming: 5 minutes

Group students into groups of 5 by who they are sitting closest to. Give each group a stack of at least 15 blank index cards and a marker.
First we just want to generate as many answers to this question as possible. Who are you? What categories of information do you use when you answer that question?
Here are some possible categories *(read a few to get them started)*:

- Citizenship
- Birthplace
- Group membership (formal: e.g. member of OneWorld club)
- Group membership (informal: e.g. Global Nomad)
- Profession (or aspiration)
- Hobbies
- Place you've lived the most years
- Race
- Gender
- Age
- Socioeconomic status
- Religion
- Parents' jobs
- etc…

Group ranking: 10 minutes

Take the cards you've just made and rank them, create a hierarchy out of them. Which is the most important to you?

Large group debrief: 15 minutes

Each group: what are the top three cards in your group?
List these out on a flip chart.
Did this cause any reactions?
Do your answers vary depending on the situation?

Break *10:50 AM – 11:00 AM*

The theory of re-entry *11:00 AM – Noon*

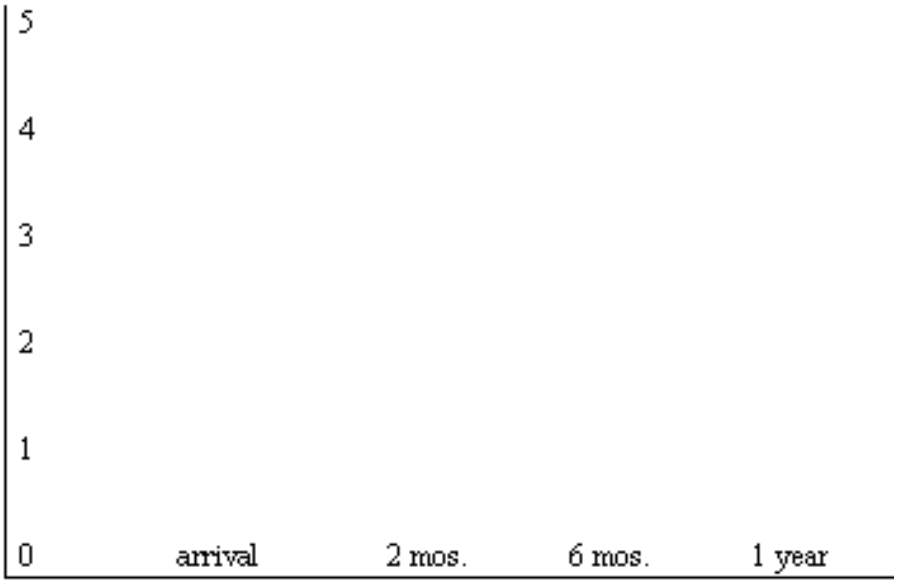
Culture shock intro: 5 minutes

All of these students have encountered culture shock already. This should seem familiar to them conceptually, even if the name, stage model, or U curve is new to them
Nancy Oberg's definition of culture shock: "an occupational disease of people who have been suddenly transplanted abroad…. Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse."
What causes culture shock?

- Loss of familiar cues
- Breakdown of interpersonal communication
- Identity crisis

Drawing the culture shock U-curve: 10 minutes

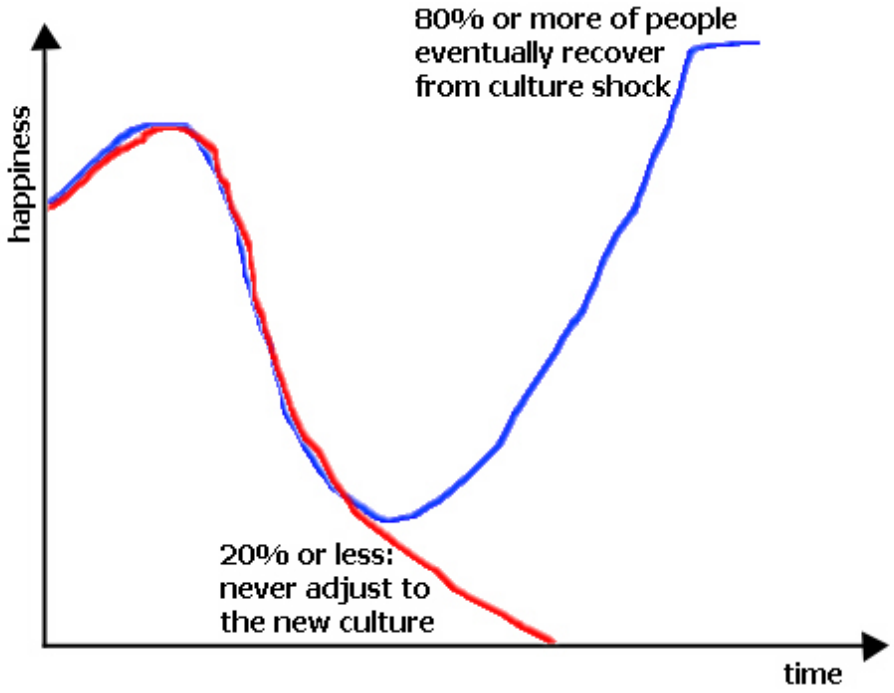
Draw a graph on a flip chart as illustrated below. The vertical line on the left represents the negativity of the feelings. The horizontal line on the bottom represents the length of time spent in the host country.



Ask:
What's a word for "very sad"? We'll use that word for the 0 on the graph. *Write that word next to the 0.*
What's a word for "very happy"? We'll use that word for the 5 on the graph. *Write that word next to the 5.*
Use an informal poll: ask students to raise their hands for the number that represents how they feel. Start with 3 and move up and down the scale to get a feel for how the majority rates their experience.

- When you knew you were coming here, how did you feel?
- Shortly after you arrived, how did you feel?
- Most people hit a point where they miss their old friends and haven't really made any new ones yet. How would you rate those emotions?
- Given a few months, you probably made some friends and began to feel like you fit in again. Can you give me a number for that?
- How about a year after you moved?

You should end up with a U-curve on the graph, similar to the blue line from the drawing below:

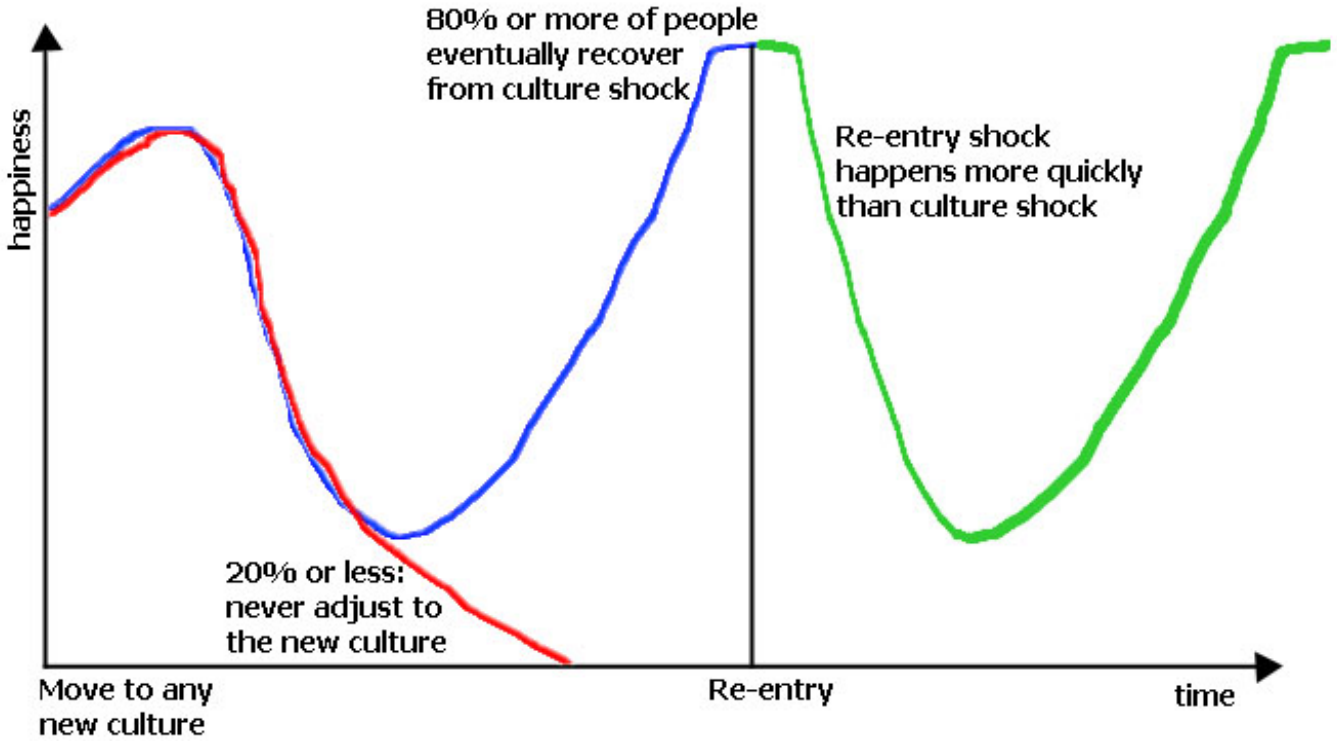


Does this seem like it relates to your experience?
Does it explain anything? It might be useful for you to use this in explaining your experience to other people.

What is Reentry Shock?: 10 minutes

Informal poll: has anyone gone back to their "home" country before? *Ask those who raise their hands if the experience was at all like "normal" culture shock.*
Definition of re-entry shock as "Reverse culture shock"
Stages of adjustment of reentry shock: *List these on the flip chart.*
1. Leave-taking/departure
2. Initial euphoria/honeymoon
3. Irritability and hostility
4. Gradual adjustment
5. Adaptation

The W-curve of culture shock + re-entry shock: *Extend the U-curve graph to include the green line, below. Refer to the stages as you draw the line. For example, "When you are leaving, you're probably excited about going "home". And when you have initially gotten home, everything seems great! But then you realize that you don't quite fit in, and things aren't as easy as you'd hoped…"*



Most TCKs have said that the most important thing to know about re-entry shock is simply that it happens at all. Being prepared for it will help you deal with it!

How does reentry shock differ from culture shock? 2 minutes

- Embarrassment at not knowing your "own" culture
- Reluctance to ask for help
- Difficult to find common ground with peers
- No opportunity to use skills gained abroad (language, etc.)
- Look like a native, feel like a stranger: the "hidden immigrant" phenomenon

Hidden immigrants – small group exercise *11:30-Noon*

Find your group: Advice from TCKs: 5 minutes

Determine how many groups you want (a group size of 4-5 is recommended). For each group, choose one of the Quotes from TCKs. Make enough copies of that quote so that there will be one copy of the quote for each member of the group. Print the quotes out on individual slips of paper or cards. Mix the quotes together randomly.
Pass the quotes out to the group, one quote per person
We're going to work with the idea of "hidden immigrants" in small groups. To get into those groups, you each have a piece of advice from a returned TCK. Find the other people who have the same quote – there should be four or five of you!

Faces and stories: 15 minutes

Hand out the grids, photos, and stories; one set for each group.
Look at each of the pictures you've got, and put each person into one of the boxes on the grid in front of you. (2 minutes)
Now flip the pictures over, read the stories on the backs of each picture, and reconsider where you have put them. (5 minutes)

Large group discussion: 8 minutes

Do you think this grid accurately represents ways that you can experience being in a culture?
What do you think some of the challenges might be for people who are "hidden immigrants"?

Lunch *Noon – 1 PM*

Before the move: avoiding re-entry shock? *1 PM – 1:15 PM*

Before the move: 5 minutes

How can you reduce reentry shock before you move?

- Develop realistic expectations
- Research & treat your "home" culture as if it were a "foreign" culture
- Choose a university with international students, in a not-too-isolated environment (urban or connected to an urban area)
- Get contact information for people you will miss: make plans to stay in touch!
- Say your goodbyes

Saying goodbye: 5 minutes

Pass out the worksheet, one per participant.
Saying goodbye is important; it helps you to bring this chapter to an end so that you can go on to the next one. And saying goodbye is not forever; in fact, the right goodbyes can open the door for future hellos!
Make a list of three places you need to go before you leave, three things you need to buy before you leave, three people you need to say goodbye to, and three other things you think you should take care of. You might want to consider things like music and unique items or experiences only available here.

Pair exercise: 5 minutes

Get into pairs with the person next to you and share a couple of items from your worksheet.

Attitudes *1:15 PM – 1:45 PM*

To reduce re-entry shock once you've made the move, you need three things:

- Attitudes
- Skills
- Knowledge

Part 1: skit: 5 minutes

One of the challenges for a returning TCK is figuring out how you are the same as, and different than, other people of your citizenship who have never left their home country. How are you different from them? How can you relate to them, and reconcile with them?

Need two volunteers, one for each role. Roles can be read or improvised from the TCK's own experience.
Scripts for Part 1 and 2 are available in the "Scripts" section of this packet.
Julie, the TCK Returnee
Omar, the Local

Part 2: discussion: 10 minutes

How could this discussion between Julie and Omar have been different?
What went wrong?
How could Julie have approached this differently? (What about Omar?)

Write ideas on a flip chart. If the group needs some help getting started, you can give them this advice right away. Otherwise, mention it after a few minutes of discussion
Some advice from TCKs on this subject:

- Emphasize feelings you've had living overseas instead of just experiences
- "Soft peddle" your experiences until you get to know people a bit
- Listen as well as talk
- Don't be arrogant about your experiences
- Get to know the locals and listen to their stories!

Part 3: skit: 5 minutes

Need two volunteers, one for each role. Roles can be read or improvised from the TCK's own experience.
Julie, the TCK Returnee
Omar, the Local

Part 4: discussion: 10 minutes

- How was this different than the first skit?
- Do you think this is realistic?
- What are some of the good things about this approach?
- What are some of its weaknesses?

Advice from TCKs:

- Don't be afraid of being disloyal to the host country(ies) if you adapt to your "home" country
- Don't be afraid of losing your identity by letting go of the things you learned in your host country
- Try to avoid putting down your home country; be respectful as you would if you were abroad
- Make an effort to understand locals' experiences, and if possible tell your own stories as they relate to locals' experiences.

Skills *1:45 – 3:20 PM*

Identity: 5 minutes

Think back to the components of identity exercise we did earlier today. We came up with a lot of categories.
Post/stick up/flip to the appropriate page to show the list.
The challenge for TCKs is which of the categories to use when we think of ourselves, and which ones to use when we introduce ourselves to people at "home"? Although the question of identity is one that many people wrestle with throughout their lives, we're going to make a plan, at least, so that you have an idea of how to answer the dreaded question, "Where are you from?"
Before we start, I want to read a quote from a Washington, DC global nomad website:

> *Where am I from?* and *Where do I belong?* are basic questions of human identity. Because global nomads have been crossing boundaries and borders of personal, social, national and cultural identity since childhood, it is no wonder many of us have felt and may still feel a sense of restlessness, conflicting loyalties, and the sense that we never completely fit in anywhere. As each of us defines, and redefines at various stages of our lives, the answers to such questions of identity in the context of the societal norms we function in, we can draw from the experiences of other GNs.

Some TCKs say that their culture is that of "the international community as a whole, wherever you find it" instead of any single culture.

Introduction plan/small group discussion: 15 minutes

Split into small groups of 4-5 people quickly, based on where you are sitting. Pass out index cards and pens to each person.

What will you say when someone asks where you are from? It should probably be a short answer. It should be one that answers the question, but implies that you have more to add – an open door for the interested party to pursue, if they want.

- For example, I tell people that I moved here from Minnesota, but did not grow up there.

In small groups, discuss this for 10 minutes. Write down a couple of short answers that seem best for you.

Each small group: pick one answer to share with the large group. Give feedback to each other on these answers.

How to: skills for survival: 10 minutes

Hand out the worksheet "Things to Know".

This is a worksheet that you'll want to fill in as you get the answers. You should try to get the answers to these things before you arrive – or soon after you arrive. Spend a few minutes looking this over.

- Do you have anything to add to this list?
- What are a few ways that you might find this information?

Write answers on the flip chart.

Break *3:20-3:30 PM*

Knowledge *3:30-4:10 PM*

Individual scavenger hunt: 30 minutes

This is an information hunt for the country you're going to! Spend 30 minutes to research and find one example for each category on the attached worksheet. You can use the Internet, books, newspapers, maps, or other participants' knowledge, but try to make sure your answers are current!

Debrief in area-specific group: 10 minutes

Break into groups according to where you're moving to.
Initially, have the students separate according to continents. If one continent has a particularly large group of students, then break it down further according to country, region, or even city.
For each category, go around the group and give a response you found, a unique one if possible. Are there any that seem strange or surprising? Are there any that are particularly funny?
When you make your move, you may want to make friends with a local person and ask them questions about some of these things. A family member might be another good resource for this information. Also, look around! These are the classmates who will be fairly close to you.
Collect the scavenger hunt sheets. After the training is over, compile the answers, and send the students their own "area-specific survival kits".

Wrap-up/Final Debrief 4:10-4:30 PM

Large group discussion – what do you anticipate? What are you worried about?
Hand out the "Advice from TCKs" and "Resources" sections.
Encourage contact with the school alumni office, etc.

Training/Seminar Materials

Pre-Seminar Needs Assessment

Name

What is your country/countries of citizenship

What country/countries do your parents currently live in

What country will you be living in after graduation?

What countries have you lived in for more than a year?

When was the last time you lived for more than a year in your country of citizenship?

Which languages do you speak fluently?

Have you attended a re-entry seminar in the past? (If so, when and where?)

Last 3 schools you have attended

What's your favorite hobby?

What expectations do you have for this re-entry seminar?

How do you currently feel about moving back to your country of citizenship?

Agenda for Attendees

Going "Home": A Guide to Surviving Re-Entry

Introduction	9:30-9:45 AM
Icebreakers Sociograms, Do you like your neighbor?	9:45-10:15 AM
Who Am I: Issues of Identity Brainstorming, Ranking, and Debrief	10:15 – 10:50 AM
Break	10:50 AM – 11:00 AM
The Theory of Re-Entry Culture Shock, the U-curve, Re-entry Shock, the W-curve	11:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Hidden Immigrants Advice from TCKs, Faces and Stories	11:30-Noon
Lunch	Noon – 1 PM
Before the Move: Avoiding Re-entry Shock	1 PM – 1:15 PM
Attitudes Skit, Discussion, Revised Skit	1:15 PM – 1:45 PM
Skills Identity, Planning, Skills for Survival	1:45 – 3:20 PM
Break	3:20-3:30 PM
Knowledge Information Scavenger Hunt, Area-Specific Debriefing	3:30-4:10 PM
Wrap-up/Final Debrief	4:10-4:30 PM

Advice From TCK Returnees

- Be yourself and be ready for lots of changes
- Laugh at your own mistakes
- It's OK to be different; don't be afraid to be out of it
- It's OK to ask for help or admit that you don't know something
- Bite your tongue for a while and learn
- Get involved with hobbies – play baseball or master computers, develop interests and skills in transferable activities
- Bring something with you from your host country and display it prominently in your room/house, to make you feel "at home"
- Music can be really important – bring some with you from your host country. And listen to some from your "home" country before you get there!
- Americans: Check out the "mindset list" from Beloit College that's sent out every year. It's a humorously enlightening view of the other entering college students!
- Don't pig out on junk food
- Limit the amount of time you watch TV
- Don't buy new clothes right away – you may well gain weight and not be able to wear them
- Buy the right clothes for your new climate (you may need warmer clothes than you had before)
- Learn how to put together a resume
- Learn how to iron and do laundry!
- Get some recipes of your favorite foods, and learn how to cook them
- Don't expect people to be interested in your 'jungle' stories; talk about yourself and your background only when it is appropriate
- Find small groups to get involved in
- Most young adults in your country are probably interested in your experiences. Don't try to fit in too much!
- Stay in touch with your family
- Even though you might not have a 'home town' where everyone returns for Thanksgiving or whatever, TCKs stay in touch like crazy.
- Try not to be impatient with others who don't know as much about the world. Instead of insisting that they are close-minded, set the positive example of being open-minded and encourage others to explore what we have learned, and we can explore their lifestyles.
- It's okay to want to be alone for a while
- Revisit your host country, if possible

Hidden Immigrants Exercise: Photos and Stories

Print out the photos on the following pages, cut them out, and put the story for each photo on the back of the photo. Give each group a copy of the grid, and its own set of photos and stories. If you need more than 5 groups, make duplicates of an entire set of photos and stories, and make an extra copy of the grid.

	Look the same	Look different
Think the same	Mirror (Native)	Adopted
Think different	Hidden Immigrant	Foreigner

Group 1: United States

	Michelle was born and brought up in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In college, she studied abroad in France for a semester, and in Senegal for another semester. She really enjoyed the experience but is happy to be home in the States again. She hopes to travel to other countries on vacations.
	Ajit's parents are from India, but he was born in New York. He went to school there for his whole life and has American citizenship. Although he has visited India several times, there's no question in his mind that New York is "home". He speaks English (with an American accent) and Hindi, attends Columbia University, and is getting his BA in Economics.

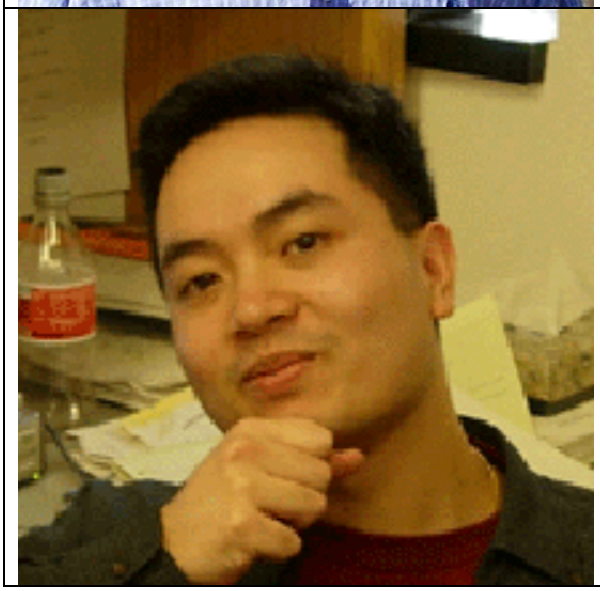
	An American “military brat”, Scott has lived in Germany, Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt, and Kenya. He returned to the United States for college and never quite knew where to say he was from. Sometimes he claimed Portland, Oregon, because he spent a few summer vacations there. Although he did well in school, he had a hard time at first with making friends, and eventually decided to pursue a career in international business.
	Armen has come to the United States for university. He was born and raised in Armenia, but has learned several different languages there. His English is good, but no one ever mistakes him for an American. Armen is enjoying school and doing well, and looks forward to working with Americans when he returns to Armenia. He plans to start an export business in Armenian cognac.

Group 2: India

	Priya is from Mumbai. Her father is an engineer and her family has traveled somewhat on holidays. Priya is in medical school now and is studying to become an oncologist. She spent a year in England at university before coming back to India for medical school.
	Wasan's family is in banking, and has set up a profitable business in New Delhi. Although they are from Oman, Wasan has only lived there for a few years, when she was fairly young. She has an Indian boyfriend and enjoys all of the traditional Indian foods. Wasan has just finished high school and is going to an Indian college for business.

	Rajeev was born and raised in Los Angeles, but his parents decided that he was a little too “American”, and sent him to a boarding school in India to let him “get back to his Indian roots”. Although Rajeev speaks the language just fine, he really misses his friends and is not sure that he fits in with his Indian cousins. He is not certain if he will stay in India when he is done with high school, or go back to L.A. for college.
	Julie has come to India to teach elementary school. A biology and education double major from St. Olaf college in Minnesota, Julie has taken advantage of the program that allows her to go to India to do her student teaching. She loves it, but she misses American movies, city life, and malls.

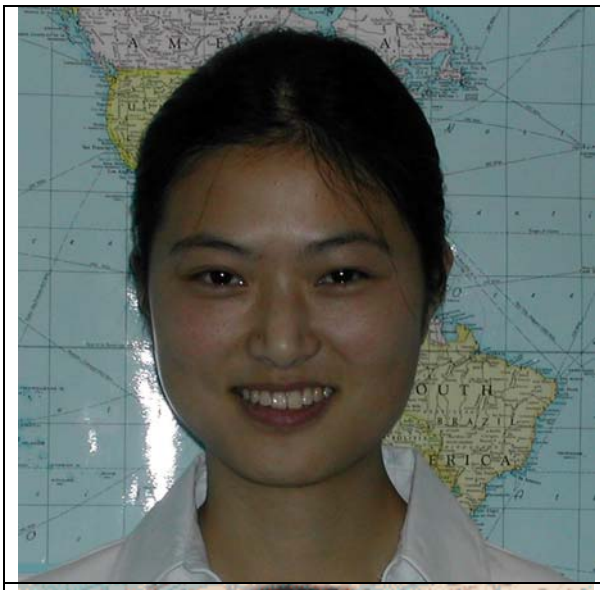
Group 3: Germany

	Karsten is a championship ping-pong player from Berlin. He is also getting an advanced degree in mathematics from the University of Berlin. Karsten enjoys good food and good wine, and has taken a couple of trips around Europe with friends.
	Tony moved to Germany when he was 8, and has thrived here. His parents are involved in an import-export business that allows them to travel fairly regularly. Tony loves German food, the music, the nightclubs, and the art scene. He speaks fluent German and has done well in school so far. He has an EU citizenship, plans to become an architect, and hopes to remain in Germany.

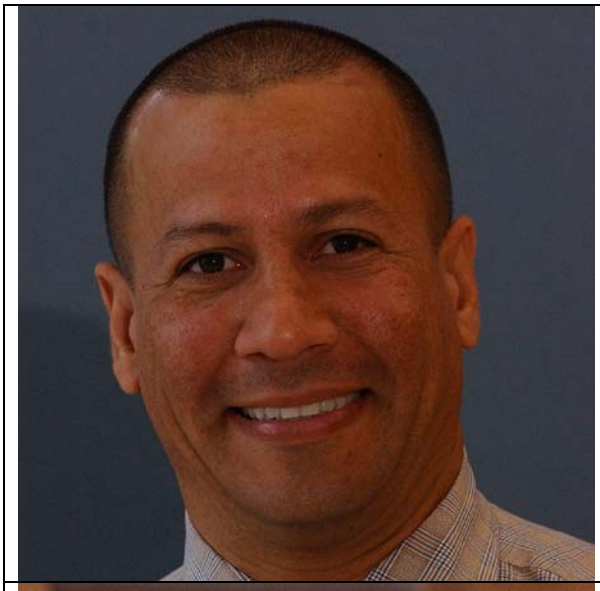
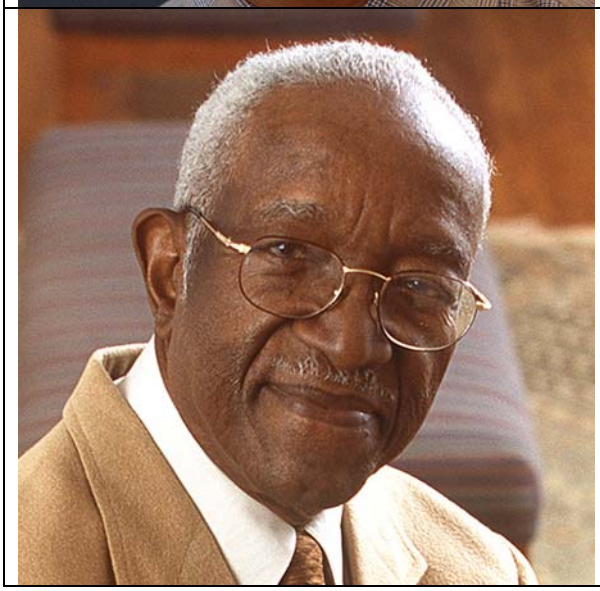
	Kathrin has German citizenship, but her father's business in the oil industry has led to her being raised in Bahrain. She attended boarding school in England. When she graduated, she spent a year in France before continuing her education at Cambridge University in England. Although she has returned to Germany to live with her now-retired parents, she misses England terribly and is considering moving back.
	Anusha is a business student from Hyderabad, India. She has come to Germany on a business exchange program and is spending a year there. She is enjoying the cross-cultural experience and loves her apartment and the shopping. However, she really misses her family in Hyderabad and looks forward to seeing them again soon.

Group 4: Korea

	Bo-ram has an advanced degree in chemistry from a highly renowned Korean university. He is a professor there. His university has an exchange program with other schools in Germany, Australia, and the United States; as a faculty member, he has been able to visit each of those countries. He enjoys playing cards and is also a skilled trumpet-player in a band in Seoul.
	Pablo's mother is Brazilian, his father is American, and he loves living in Korea. His father's military career took them to Korea in the first place, and they spent several years there. Pablo went to school in the United States but returned to Korea on a study abroad program. After he graduated, he moved back to Seoul and began to work for an international consulting firm here. He is married to a Korean national.

	Jessica was born in Korea but adopted shortly after her birth by American parents. Although her parents made certain to take Jessica to Korea several times as she was growing up, those trips were always somewhat touristy for her, and she never really felt at home there. She has decided to study abroad in Korea to try to learn a little more about her birth culture. She considers herself completely American, and gets a little tired of having to explain why she speaks such perfect American English.
	Ayesha is delighted to be visiting Korea, but it is definitely a visit for her. On a six-month student visa from her home in Kuwait, Ayesha is studying Korean. She loves learning new languages and plans to become a translator back home in Kuwait when she is done with her program here in Korea.

Group 5: Mexico

	Luis is a teacher at a private school in Queretaro, near Mexico City. He loves his work and spends his weekends with friends and his extensive family. He loves *ranchero* music. Luis has enjoyed several visits to the United States, Belize, and even a trip to Tanzania.
	John's family moved to Mexico when he was 11, and he has thrived there. Originally from Houston, John speaks fluent Spanish and has married a Mexican woman. They visit the family in America from time to time, but are delighted with their life and work in Mexico.

	Mario is a child of Mexican businesspeople, whose work took them to Spain when he was young. Although the language is more or less the same between Spain and Mexico, Mario has found, upon returning towards the end of high school, that the culture is not the same. He misses the continental atmosphere of Madrid and is not a huge fan of Mexican music. The food is very different, too. Mario is planning on applying to schools in Spain for his higher education.
	Crystal first came to Mexico to go scuba diving in Cozumel, and fell in love with the country. She has since come back to visit many times, and has made some good friends here. Her Spanish is improving and she has opened a dive shop of her own with some of her Mexican and international friends. She still goes home to California on a regular basis, though.

Saying goodbye

If you don't say your goodbyes, it can be hard to make a good start in your new home.

Three places to go before I leave:

Three things to buy before I leave:

Three people to say goodbye to:

Three other things to take care of before I leave:

Scripts

Skit

Julie, the TCK Returnee
Omar, the Local

Julie: Hi! My name's Julie. I just moved here.
Omar: Oh hi! I'm Omar, it's nice to meet you. So where did you move from?
Julie: India.
Omar: Indiana?
Julie: No, India. You know, the country…
Omar: Oh wow, *that* India, wow, that must have been interesting!
Julie: Oh, it was! I really loved India. We used to go hiking every weekend, and we'd go through villages where there wasn't even a road to it….
[As **Julie** talks, **Omar** looks increasingly bored and uninvolved.]
Julie: …I'd eat mangoes and curries all the time, and I rode an elephant several times. I went to the Taj Mahal and I saw tigers in Jim Corbett National Park. It was great.
Omar: Oh… heh heh… so did you ride an elephant to school?
Julie: No! What a dumb question. I walked, or took the bus. What do you think India is, the Dark Ages?
Omar: Well, whatever, I've gotta go.

Skit, Revised

Julie, the TCK Returnee
Omar, the Local

Julie: Hi! My name's Julie. I just moved here.
Omar: Oh hi! I'm Omar, it's nice to meet you. So where did you move from?
Julie: India.
Omar: Indiana?
Julie: No, India. You know, the country…
Omar: Oh wow, *that* India, wow, that must have been interesting!
Julie: Oh, it was! I really loved India. We used to go hiking every weekend… it was beautiful. Are there any good places to hike around here?
Omar: Yeah, there are some really pretty state parks. I bet they're not as cool as hiking in India, though!
Julie: Well, I'm sure it's different, but I haven't ever hiked here, so it'll be new to me! I mean, there you have rainforests and stuff, but here you have leaves that change color in the fall. I've never seen that.
Omar: Oh, really? My friends and I are going on a hiking trip in a week or so, and the leaves should be really pretty. Maybe you can come along.
Julie: Seriously? That'd be great! Thanks for the offer!

Things to Know

How do I call home?

How do I get around?

How do I learn to drive?

How do I take care of laundry?

What are the following phone numbers:

- Operator
- Police/Fire/Ambulance
- Poison Information line
- Suicide hotline
- Rape hotline

What is the local drug situation, and how do I want to handle it?

Permanent address – what will I use?

What clubs and groups might I want to join?

How can I meet others with international experiences?

Where will I go during breaks (e.g. winter, spring)?

What will I do if I get sick?

How will I get a local ID or drivers' license?

How will I pay bills, get a bank account, etc.?

Scavenger Hunt

For the country/area you're going to, find at least one example of:

Current slang, with a definition or explanation: _____

New technology: _____

Popular food: _____

What's "in": _____

What's "out": _____

The current exchange rate between here and there: _____

Cost of a basic item (e.g. a cheap meal, a bus, a CD): _____

A popular TV show: _____

A fashionable "look" or item of clothing: _____

A "look" that's really unpopular/out of style: _____

What the university system is like (e.g. what's the stance on plagiarism? do you live in apartments, at home, or in dorms?): _____

One major event in the last five years: _____

A basic social standard for your age group (e.g. who picks up the bill at a restaurant?) _____

Names of particular areas of your new city: _____

A way to get laundry done: _____

A popular musician/album: _____

A popular movie: _____

A popular book: _____

Resources

Books

Austin, Clyde N. *Cross-Cultural Reentry: A Book of Readings*.

A great collection of studies, personal accounts and research about the effects of returning to your host culture from living in a foreign culture. The personal stories are this book's strong suit.

Austin, Clyde N. *Cross-Cultural Reentry: An Annotated Bibliography*, 3rd ed. 1986.

The really long and exhaustive version of this list. If you're doing research, this is a great tool.

Bell, Linda. *Hidden Immigrants: Legacies of Growing Up Abroad*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2001.

A collection of interviews from TCKs about their experiences with returning home and dealing with life as a TCK, organized by subject. A good read after you've been "at home" for a little while; you will likely empathize with many of these "voices".

Gordon, Alma Daughterty. *Don't Pig Out on Junk Food: The MK's Guide to Survival in the U.S*.

Aimed specifically at missionary kids, this book has some valuable tips and quotes from returned MKs. It assumes a particular "style" of mission life that may not have been true for all TCKs.

Jordan, Peter. *Re-Entry: Making the Transition from Missions to Life at Home.* Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1992.

A very mission-focused book probably more suitable for slightly older people; may be a good book for your parents. Has some good points and tips, many of which are found in other resources.

Kohls, L. Robert. *Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad*, 3rd ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1996.

This handy little book is mostly for people about to move overseas, but does have a good chapter on re-entry.

Maalouf, Amin. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2000.

Not specifically for the internationally mobile community, this is an engaging exploration of identity by a French-Lebanese Christian. Maalouf discusses the multiple parts that make up who we are, and how we can fit in many ways… and none.

Pollock, David, and Ruth Van Reken. *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2001.

One of the most commonly recommended TCK books, this is informative and well-organized. It is divided primarily into three sections: The World of Third Culture Kids, The TCK Profile, and Maximizing the Benefits.

Shepard, Steven. *Managing Cross-Cultural Transition: A Handbook for Corporations, Employees, and Their Families*. Putnam Valley, NY: Aletheia Publications, 1997.

Focused on corporations and their families, this deals with challenges encountered abroad as well as the frustrations of coming home.

Smith, Caroline D., ed. *Strangers at Home*. Putnam Valley, NY: Aletheia Publications, 1996.
This anthology presents varied perspectives on the effects of living overseas and coming "home" to a country that seems just as foreign as the one left behind. Includes useful advice for parents seeking to help their children – especially teenagers – cope with the experience of reentry and fitting in.

Storti, Craig. *The Art of Coming Home*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1997.
Much of this book is targeted at the temporary expat population rather than TCKs or global nomads. It's got some valuable advice, though, and in the last chapter addresses exchange students, international volunteers, the military, and missionaries. The missionary section is where Storti deals with all of the various types of TCK.

Web sites

TCK World – Dedicated to the Support and Understanding of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). http://www.tckworld.com/
Information, links, bibliographies, etc. Some interesting articles are available for free on this site.

Children of the Wind. http://www.windchild.co.uk/
Research project on Global Nomads, with a message board and shared stories.

Global Nomads Virtual Village. http://www.gnvv.org/
The website for Global Nomads International, and a virtual portal for Global Nomads.

WorldWeave's Global Nomads page. http://www.worldweave.com/GN.html
Essays on being a Global Nomad, links to international schools.

Interaction International. http://www.tckinteract.net/
Publishes *Interact Magazine* and *Among Worlds Magazine*, both by & for TCKs.

Slanguage. http://www.slanguage.com
Fairly current American slang.

Clubs, organizations, and offices

Your university's International Student office.

You may not be an international student, but this office often has resources for Global Nomads/Third Culture Kids.

Global Nomads clubs.

Many universities have chapters of clubs like this; some metro areas do. For example, http://www.globalnomads-dc.org/ is the website for Global Nomads in Washington, DC.

Your school's alumni network.

Often, schools have websites for their alums. Keep in touch with your classmates, and use this network to find local alumni where you now live. They'll have good advice and local information for you.

Articles

When no place feels like home: US students schooled abroad often gain the world - but sometimes lose their bearings.

By Corinna Schuler

Originally published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 23, 2003 edition; available online : http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1223/p14s02-legn.html

BANGKOK, THAILAND – Sprawled on the outskirts of Thailand's chaotic capital is an extraordinary school where teenage globe-trotters trade stories of climbing pyramids in Egypt, tracking lions in Africa, and touring art galleries in France.

Many of the 600 Americans attending the International School of Bangkok (ISB) speak at least two languages. They have firsthand knowledge of world geography and foreign cultures. They can smoothly debate international affairs with adults twice their age.

But, like 17-year-old Rachel Wintheiser, many of these young sophisticates begin to stammer when asked the seemingly simple question, "Where are you from?"

"Ummmm, I guess I am from Illinois," Rachel says during a recent class break. "Or Wisconsin. That is where we spent our summers so it is home, more than any other place, I guess."

An American by birth and parentage, Rachel has lived in Germany, Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt, and now Thailand, all before graduating from high school. Experts call Rachel and her classmates third culture kids (TCKs) - part of a growing league of young people who feel like

PHOTO BY JOHN NORDELL - STAFF

outsiders both in the country on their passport (the first culture) and in the country of their residence (the second culture).

Instead, their greatest sense of belonging is found in a "third culture" of peers for whom everywhere, and nowhere, is home.

Such children reside in every corner of the globe, from Italy to Indonesia, Brazil to Botswana - any country where American parents are working as military officers, missionaries, embassy officials, journalists, factory managers, or business executives.

With 7 million US passports issued in foreign countries each year, estimates suggest roughly 4 million American youngsters are growing up overseas. A typical expat family is on the move every two or three years.

What is the long-term impact of such an exotic, rootless childhood? That question is debated today as new websites, support groups, research studies, and dozens of books seek to advise and analyze this expanding group of global nomads.

The experts agree that TCKs are multilingual, highly adaptable, broad-minded, often untouched by racial stereotypes, and more culturally aware than their peers back home. They are self-reliant and socially mature. In one sense, they are the ideal citizens in a globalized world. But American peers are more likely to view them as pampered misfits.

A typical American teen might watch a lot of TV, work at McDonald's, and learn to drive. Expat kids, on the other hand, may have missed out on "The Simpsons," are prohibited from working in foreign countries and - in nations like Thailand - are routinely served by chauffeurs and maids.

"In California, I didn't know how to ride the bus," admits graduate Leilani Franklin-Apted, speaking to a class of ISB students about the reverse culture shock she endured upon returning "home." "Kids thought I was stupid because I didn't know how to do laundry. My clothes came out all funny colors. I said, 'Well, I had a maid.' "

Other TCKs talk of feeling like oddities because they cannot keep up with references to pop culture or do not know how to pump their own gas. At the same time, TCKs find it hard to relate to American friends who seem never to have examined a world map.

"They say things like, 'Thailand? How long does it take to drive there?' " laughs Kristen Weir, an 11th-grader who has spent the past five years in Thailand and Sri Lanka. "They say: 'Do you speak Taiwanese?' or 'Do you ride an elephant to school?' They seem to think that all foreign countries are in the Stone Age."

For Leilani, the reverse culture shock and loneliness she experienced in America were too much to take. She ended up returning "home" to Bangkok to spend time with family and consider where to attend college.

Studies conducted by researchers at San Diego University suggest Leilani is far from alone. Of the nearly 700 adult TCKs who answered in-depth surveys conducted by Ann

Baker Cottrell, 90 percent reported feeling "out of sync" with their US peers - even into their 20s and 30s.

Ms. Cottrell says many reported experiences of a "prolonged adolescence." Some were unable to make decisions about where to live or what career to pursue. TCKs can be reluctant to "settle down" and they often end relationships at the slightest sign of trouble.

Adult TCKs say all the abrupt goodbyes during sensitive adolescent years left them with unresolved grief and insecurity. In addition to a new school and a new culture, each move brought a freshly broken heart.

"I've had four or five best friends," says Neils, a 17-year-old ISB student. "Every year a new friend, and then they just move. I do make new friends, but I know they won't last." So now, he says, he withdraws a little more to build an emotional shield.

Even the US State Department has recognized the potential for trouble. Its Family Liaison Office has a website that directs TCKs to a Washington support group called Around the World In A Lifetime (AWAL) and warns, "Interpersonal relationships are more likely to be left behind during a move than resolved, depriving TCK's of 'practice' in a very important life skill."

Neils is taking "Cross Cultural Communication," a course designed by teacher Jim Westgate to help prepare students for life after high school. Instead of giving tests, Mr. Westgate asks teenagers here to write essays about their feelings. His filing cabinet is stacked with papers that reveal confusion and loneliness. One student wrote: "I would like to believe enough scar tissue has been built up and that I will not feel sorrow at future separations, but in truth I know I will."

Despite the difficulties, however, adult TCKs seem to agree that the benefits of their lifestyle outweigh the negatives. Cottrell's research confirmed that TCKs are more successful in school and careers than their American counterparts. While only 21 percent of Americans graduate with a four-year university degree, 81 percent of expatriate kids go on to earn at least a bachelor's degree. Half of those will take a master's degree or doctorate. Most will also achieve higher-ranking professions and many will enter service careers with the aim of helping developed countries.

A tour of the palatial ISB campus explains these results. The school, set amid sprawling lawns and fountains, has high-tech gadgets and facilities that public-school principals in America can only dream about. More than 1,700 students (K-12) have access to classrooms with 850 computers; 60,000 books; videos and CDs; a 750-seat theater, and seven illuminated tennis courts.

There are 10 students for every faculty member. The teachers are mostly American, as is the curriculum. Field trips include archaeological digs, a visit to NASA headquarters in the US, or ecotrekking in Bhutan.

"This kind of education is not available to your average kid in the US," says physics teacher Ian Jacobs.

"We just don't see the kinds of problems that are plaguing Western education - violence, truancy, poor discipline," he says. "I wouldn't even know what to do with a student who acted out. It just hasn't happened here."

Little wonder that American universities line up for the chance to recruit students from ISB and international schools like it elsewhere. Graduates here routinely end up at schools such as Yale, Harvard, and MIT.

Parents who could not afford to send their children to a school of such caliber in the United States have access to ISB because their employers pay for - or subsidize - education costs as long as the family remains overseas. That fact alone is what keeps many parents on the move.

ISB works hard to ensure that the opulent surroundings do not leave students isolated from the country in which they reside. Each high school student must do at least 40 hours of community service to graduate - and most do more.

The volunteer work in orphanages, slums, and homeless shelters only adds to the perspective these students have already gained simply by attending classes with kids from 50 different countries.

"It is my plan for the future to help spread the knowledge I have acquired," one student wrote to Westgate in his final essay. "If the world understood these [cultural] differences, then there would have been less wars fought in the past and less lives wasted."

Global Nomads Have Group of Their Own. To Belong to This Group, One Cannot Belong to One Country or Culture.

By Gary Edwards

Originally published in *The Virginian-Pilot*, Friday, October 21, 1994

Please don't ask Elizabeth Kehrig where's she's from.

She'll probably answer your question with one of her own: Where am I from when?

The 18-year-old Kempsville High School senior was born in Portsmouth Naval Hospital to an American father from Detroit, Mich., and an English mother. She has lived in Virginia Beach and London, has traveled widely throughout Europe and holds an American passport.

Her maternal grandfather was a British subject born in Burma; her maternal grandmother was also British, but born in Uganda. Her mother, Catherine Kehrig, was born in Windsor, England, though she spent much of her life on her parents' rubber plantations in Burma, Pakistan and Uganda.

Elizabeth Kehrig isn't being rude if she demurs when asked where she is from. She is simply a ``global nomad," a three-generation global nomad. Like her mother, Elizabeth spent a large part of her youth living outside her passport country due to a parent's occupation. That's the definition of a global nomad. They are the offspring of diplomats, international business people, government workers, military personnel and missionaries; those whose occupations take them across national boundaries.

``Global nomads have a sense of belonging in several cultures, rather a smorgasbord of cultures," said Catherine Kehrig, who holds a degree in geography from Old Dominion University.

If the term sounds new and unfamiliar, you needn't feel alone. Elizabeth and her mother are trying to introduce the idea and start a group for people who share this common bond.

On a recent evening, the two waited in the Kempsville meeting room of the Kempsville Library, folding handouts and talking about what it means to be a global nomad. Catherine Kehrig had prepared a presentation and wanted to share her experiences with others of similar background. When the expected kindred spirits failed to arrive, the women talked about their experiences.

``I left here to live in England 5 1/2 years ago," said Elizabeth. ``Now people ask me if I'm glad to be home. I don't really think of Virginia Beach as home."

In the parlance of the global nomad, America is Elizabeth's country of passport. Home is where the heart is, and where the formative memories live and that's England for Elizabeth now.

She said that it's not so much anti-Americanism, as it is that the people, the institutions, the culture of England still feel like home to her.

``The largest school I attended in England had 250 students,'' she said. ``There are more students at one lunch bell at Kempsville than in any school I attended in England.''

Though she speaks with no discernible British accent, Elizabeth did betray her recent cultural influence when her mother asked her to use the copy machine. Elizabeth left the room with several documents and quickly returned. She would have to wait, she said, there was a ``queue'' at the copier. Most thoroughly American 18-year-olds would have said ``a long line.''

Elizabeth hopes to attend either Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg or the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. She plans to major in international relations.

Growing Up With a World View: Nomad Children Develop Muiticultural Skills

By Norma M. McCaig

(This article originally appeared in *Foreign Service Journal*, September 1994, pp. 32-41. It is available on the Web at From http://www.kaiku.com/nomads.html)

I can still hear the wind from the dust storm that hit Delhi during the waning days of my trip this May. Powerful images of Tamul Nadu, further south, are equally vivid—of 70 picnicking street children from the Madurai and Bethabia orphanage striking unsteady dancing positions and then collapsing in delight around me. Memories of this chance two-hour encounter near my childhood school in Kodaikanal—five weeks and a world away from my Virginia home—are a source of both pain and wonder. Pain at having said yet another goodbye and wonder at the circumstance that brought me to that moment.

I am acutely aware that had I not been given a childhood overseas, this melange of memories from the old and recent past would likely not exist. But they are indelibly part of my heritage as a "global nomad," someone who has lived abroad as a child because of a parent's job. These include the children of diplomats; other government workers, including the armed forces; business people and missionaries.

These children often live a privileged lifestyle, with exotic vacations, servants, large homes and private schooling, but the long-term benefits of this upbringing are unique and more far-reaching. In an era when global vision is imperative, where skills in intercultural communication, linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy, and the ability to manage diversity are critical, global nomads are probably better equipped than others. A tendency to view the United States from the perspective of a foreigner is a trait common to many nomads. A nomad who spent much of his childhood in Africa recently commented, "I feel I am an American, but not to the exclusion of other countries, cultures and peoples."

Carolyn D. Smith, in her 1991 book, The Absentee American: Repatriates' Perspectives on America, reports that for many adult nomads, living and working overseas is a lifelong goal. "A study of 150 repatriates enrolled in college who had spent at least one teenage

year abroad found that none wished to pursue a career exclusively in the United States," she wrote in the book. More than 50 percent wanted work exclusively or periodically abroad, 12 percent wanted job-related foreign travel, and 74 percent reported that they feel most comfortable with people who are internationally oriented.

Sociologist David Pollock, director of intercultural programming at Houghton College in New York, has studied the personality and psychological adjustment of what he calls "third-culture kids." He defines them as "individuals who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents' culture, develop a sense of relationship to all the cultures while not having a full ownership in any."

These children become "cultural chameleons" early in life—keen observers who modify their behavior so they fit in wherever they are. Many actually appreciate diversity, and seek it out as adults. The ease with which young global nomads roam the world can create for them an enhanced world view, a concept validated by the recent research team including sociologist Ruth Hill Useem, who pioneered research on third-culture kids in the early 1960s. Her study-in-progress documents that "About half (47 percent) of those who report volunteer activities include an international dimension." Global nomads often serve as cultural liaisons and interpreters between U.S. culture and the rest of the world. They are the "prototype citizens of the 21st century," according to Ted Ward, author of the 1984 book, Living Overseas.

Brian Lev, a Foreign Service child and now a computer network security analyst at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, spent five years in Chile and three years in Belgium with his parents. Although based in Washington, Lev works in an international community and travels abroad frequently. "I sometimes think everyone around me view the world in a terribly simplistic way," he said. "Even my best friends often shake their heads and change the subject when I find their viewpoint too ethno-or Ameri-centric." This sense of having the world as a learning ground is very common. Few global nomads interviewed said that they would opt to have been reared in Hometown, U.S.A.

And yet, anyone who has been either a child or a parent overseas knows that it is not uncommon for a global nomad children to feel rootless and out-of-step or marginalized. They sometimes appear indecisive and noncommittal or have difficulty establishing and maintaining long-term relationships. Occasionally these feelings are played out in the form of alcohol or drug abuse, eating disorders, depression or other dysfunctional behavior. Problems may appear during overseas postings, but are more likely to show up in the years between moving from a life abroad to a life at "home" in the United States. Many parents are surprised at the metamorphosis of their compliant, pleasant teenager into a rebellious, petulant, angry, withdrawn and irresponsible adolescent. Even more astonishing, but not necessarily uncommon, is this delayed adolescence in the twentysomething-year-old who is supposed to be beyond that age.

Usually, the Foreign Service or business career family abroad is better educated than the average U.S. family. Useem's research findings show that 81 percent of grown global nomads earned, at minimum, a bachelor's degree (vs. 21 percent of the general U.S. population) with fully half completing master's and doctorate programs. Today only 40

percent of Foreign Service families consist of a married couple with children. Last year a random sampling of Community Liaison Office (CLO) reports suggested that more than three percent of the Foreign Service are single parents and many more are dual-career couples.

Parents go abroad feeling somewhat prepared for duty in a specific place, but many are less prepared to deal with multiple moves on two or more continents and the birth of one, two or four children, perhaps each in a different corner of the globe. Like many globe-trotting parents, their upbringing was probably geographically stable, a relatively monocultural upbringing. Global parents roam the world rearing children without a road map. Extended families and long-trusted friends are often inaccessible. To complicate things further, the children's grandparents may actively disapprove of the routine uprooting of their grandchildren, spoiling them with an unrealistically privileged lifestyle, and exposing them to constant danger from microbes and terrorists. Other support systems need to be developed to supplant family and friends, such as the networks and resources from the embassy committee.

A unique characteristic of the global-nomad family is the high degree of interdependence of family members. Because the nuclear family is the only consistent social unit through all moves, family members are psychologically thrown back on one another in a way that is not typical in geographically stable families. Close family bonds are common. Siblings and parents may become each other's best friends. Patterns formed overseas fly in the face of conventional theory about when children leave home, emotionally and physically. Kay Eakin, education counselor at State's Family Liaison Office, writes, "Many [expatriate] children have gotten used to an international lifestyle and hate to give that up." These "boomerang kids" have a need for a strong continuing relationship with parents, the only "home" they know.

The strength of this family bond works to the benefit of children when parent-child communication is good and the overall family dynamic is healthy. It can be devastating when it is not. Compared to the geographically stable child, the global-nomad child is inordinately reliant on the nuclear family for affirmation, behavior-modeling, support and above all, a place of safety. The impact, therefore, of dysfunction in this most basic of units in exacerbated by the mobile lifestyle.

Constant unresolved family tension can become chronically debilitating. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse, sometimes prompted by adult alcohol abuse or depression, may go unnoticed or unacknowledged by others for a variety of reasons, such as misguided notions about "respecting privacy," or fear of repatriation or family disgrace with colleagues. Finally, parents may be unaware of abuse of a child by a household employee, sometimes prompted by different ideas of discipline and affection than those of the U.S. family. Good communication between parent and children is key.

When parents step on the plane with their children for a life abroad they become a bicultural family, one which may well be on its way to becoming a multicultural family—even when each member holds the same national passport. Why? Because the context of the parents' upbringing and that of their children may vary vastly. A first child may teethe in Uganda, tie a first shoelace in Belgium and come of age in Thailand. In the

process, of course, the child is observing human interaction in a variety of cultural contexts, of which the parents' is only one.

Cultural influences include schools, the caregiver's culture, host cultures, the parents' cultures of origin, the expatriate community culture, and the culture of the sponsoring community, in this case the Foreign Service. Considering the variety of cultural influences on a child at just one post and multiplying these by the three-plus posts, indicates how the children's hearts, souls, minds and identities are shaped by a multitude of factors.

Brian Lev, now in his mid-thirties, recalls home as "made up of those memories and emotions I have collected over time from which I draw comfort and strength as needed. In effect, home is the place where I can go in my mind where culture is a mix from many places and belonging can be taken for granted. ... It's as if we [global nomads] have replaced the physical home of non-nomads ... with an internal home we can go to when we need a respite from the world. I think of us as looking out at the world from a place inside that we share with other nomads."

Schooling demands close attention from parents. Curricula designed to meet the needs of a specific national school system reflect different academic standards, cultural norms, languages, learning styles and patterns of thinking. Thus children who move from one education system to another need time to adjust and may require tutoring and extra classes. But the adventure-child who is innately more flexible may respond well to, and indeed benefit from, experiencing more than one educational system during a childhood abroad.

However, choosing one system and maintaining it from post to post is of particular importance to a child who finds adapting to new situations and contexts difficult. This includes the learning-disabled child for whom resources at many international schools are limited. In this case, a U.S. boarding school with special facilities is an option to be considered.

The degree to which a child is affected by the host culture depends on the length of stay, the degree of contact with the local culture, and most importantly, the parents' attitude toward host nationals. Perhaps the strongest connection a child can have to a host country is through a caregiver. Often it is this person who shares the culture's language, behavior, and, to some degree, values. Of greatest influence on the [expatriate] child is the impact of the [expatriate] community itself . . .

In general, parents can adopt a four-tier strategy for coping with the challenges of raising global nomads. Communication: Keeping the lines of communication open is important, not only between parent and child, but also between spouses. Get the issues out there and work them through. Children are like lightning rods for parental discord and family tension. A 1993 study by State's Office of Medical Services showed that children who allowed to fully express their feelings and concerns make a better adjustment to moves.

Encourage children to talk about their lives, reactions, feelings, and observations. Learn to accept or challenge what they say in the spirit of developing their skills in critical

thinking rather than as a means of judging or controlling them. Gently get them accustomed to communicating with you when times are good, so they will do the same during bad times. Keep reminding yourself about the difference between discipline (guidance) and punishment (power) and the effects of each on parent-child communication.

Collaboration: Give your child as many real choices as you can. Many global nomad children, as do some spouses, feel that they have little control over their lives. For example, withholding knowledge of an impending transfer from children until shortly before the packers come does not spare them pain, it magnifies it. There is no time to adjust to the thought of moving; what should be a normal international move feels more like an evacuation.

Transfers can, in fact, make the global nomad child feel like a piece of luggage carried on and off planes at regular intervals. Whatever life has built up, whatever feelings of attachment have been formed, can seem devalued and considered expendable by parents. Eating disorders, particularly anorexia, are for some global nomads a manifestation of the need to control something in their lives when the stress and ambiguities of an international lifestyle are too overwhelming. Unwillingness or inability to commit or set goals in later adolescence and beyond may be related to early feelings of powerlessness. One way to deal with that is to include the child as much as possible—and as early as possible—in a family decision-making process at an age-appropriate level.

Continuity: Three elements come to mind, in a addition to the family itself, in considering continuity during a life abroad. These include things (furniture, favorite possessions and toys), photographs and family rituals. Hang on to the first as much as possible from post to post, take lots of the second, and create and maintain a good number of the third. Rituals are the visible signs of your family's heritage, the glue holding the pieces of former lives together with those found in new places. In our family, we could always count on having waffles on Sunday night, wherever we were. Three decades later, each time we use the little syrup pitchers we each had I am taken back to a different home.

Single parents and tandem couples should tenaciously guard their time with their children. Relying too heavily on a nanny can heighten a child's sense of abandonment. Although a number of social events may seem to be "mandatory," take a good look at missing some.

Friendships in a highly-mobile lifestyle sometimes seem short-lived, yet many adults report that the renewal of old friendships is a source of unexpected joy and continuity. To reinforce the notion of maintaining friendships over time and space, on birthdays some parents give their children the gift of a free telephone call to a friend anywhere in the world. Such efforts encourage children to view their life using other than conventional constructs: they are not rootless, they are rooted in a different way—through people rather than places.

Global nomads recognize each other. Regardless of passport held, countries lived in, sponsoring agency differences or age, nomads have a sudden recognition of kinship, a sense of homecoming that underlines the powerful bond of shared culture. Universities

and colleges, such as George Mason University, Duke University, the university of Virginia and at least 10 others in the United States encourage the forming of global nomad clubs on campus to reinforce this community.

Closure: This is a critical part of the journey. With as many uprootings and replantings as internationally mobile families experience, many parents are either unaware of, unwilling or afraid to address the need for closure—good goodbyes—before moving on. Yet the reality is that many global nomads go through more grief experiences before the age of 18 than others do in a lifetime.

Sometimes parents struggling with their own feelings of grief find it difficult to address similar feelings in children. But when one's sense of loss is unacknowledged, a natural emotion process is thwarted. Repeated often enough, it can kick back in the form of diffused depression, anger or another dysfunctional expression.

Well before leaving, parents are urged to talk about the new destination to get them used to the idea of leaving. Giving children permission to express their sadness at leaving their caregivers, treasured friends, pets and places is key, as is sharing your own feelings with them.

Small wonder also, then, that the global nomad child often finds transition to the country of passport to be a startling experience at best. It is at this point that differences in cultures and expectations between parent and child become most apparent. Parents returning to their country of origin are coming home; their children are leaving home. No doubt parents are changed by international travel and experience the impact of reentry, but they are usually on more familiar cultural and geographical ground than their offspring. Children step off the plane "riding on their parents' mythology," as global nomad Timothy Dean, now a TV-producer, remarked. Noted another mother, the spouse of a World Bank executive: "For my children, home is just another somewhere."

Children often feel and function like hidden immigrants when they reach home shores. Because they look and talk as if they should belong, their outlook, actions, and lack of knowledge of local cultural trivia are often bewildering to others who either don't know they have lived abroad or don't care. The child is left on the outside looking in, skirting the margins of the group along with the druggies and geeks.

In terms of timing, research indicates that transitions during the early adolescent years—from age 12 to 14—can be particularly tough for children. Their re-entry can be made easier by parents and extended family who can accept that these children are really of another culture and who are realistic about how long it will take the children to adapt.

The long-term cultural identity of children presents perhaps the greatest challenge and potential conflict between generations. Foreign Service life dictates that U.S. diplomats maintain their "Americanness" for properly representing the United States. On the other hand, their children are absorbing a wider environment, one that emphasizes cultural flexibility and an expanded world view. Other cultures may fit children's personalities and values more than does the U.S. culture. Children may also continue to identify with

the mobile expatriate life and seek that in adulthood—or conversely, they may rebel against such rootlessness and seek a stable stateside life.

"Even now I find myself reacting to the world as a nomad," says Lev. "I have no room in my basement because I can't make myself throw away all those perfectly good packing boxes. I still get a really bad case of wanderlust every four years or so, and the dirtiest word I know is 'goodbye.'"

On a cultural continuum with total identification with the United States at one extreme and total identification as a world citizen at the other, each child may choose to alight at a different point. To name a few: a dual-culture marriage with a partner of a different passport, different race or different religion; a different country of residence (children may not be going "native," they may be going home); staying in the United States but not feeling fully at home.

Parents having chosen their children's childhood lifestyle, need to provide affirmation and support as they try to make the pieces fit. As one established adult global nomad put it, "I don't feel different, I am different." For global nomads, these feelings are not a phase, they represent a state of being. Provided an environment that acknowledges and values their global background, [expatriate] children can—and many will—make positive changes in the world.

Follow-up

Tasks for the trainer

- Make and distribute "country survival guides" out of the findings of the seminar attendees
- Ask alumni office to connect alumni in specific region with new graduates moving there
- Contact school to facilitate address exchange/creation of a class address book
- Contact school to encourage/facilitate creation of class website, egroup, etc.
- After the students have moved, contact ones in the trainer's area and "check in" with them