Counseling Global Nomads and Foreign Exchange Students in U.S. Schools

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Abstract

Global nomads are those who spend a significant portion of their developmental years outside the parents' culture. Many accompany parents on career moves, others complete foreign exchange years with host families. These students provide benefits and challenges to school professionals. This article provides a model of school counselor response when working with global nomad and foreign exchange students derived from previous research and guidelines provided by foreign exchange programs.

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As the world becomes an increasingly global economy, it is inevitable that students with international backgrounds will populate our schools in increasing numbers. Some of these students are United States citizens who live and attend schools in other countries, either accompanying their family or without their parents through foreign exchange programs. Others are foreign students attending U.S. schools in similar fashions. While these students might be seen as more mature and socially capable than their peers, they bring their own unique challenges to the teachers and counselors in their schools. Very often, these students can become valuable resources for schools and counselors, but frequently the students feel isolated from peers and look for friends who will accept outcasts (Eakin, 1996; Gerner, Perry, Moselle, & Archibold, 1992; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

The focus of this article is on two populations of adolescents: those who have lived internationally with their families, and those who are foreign exchange students for a year. The author recognizes a third international population that is increasing in our schools as well: the population of both legal and illegal immigrant students and refugees who move with their family to another country. However, while this third group frequently also has specific needs, they are not the focus of this article. Readers are directed to publications that focus directly on the immigrant and refugee population for information and practices of support (e.g., Baptiste, 1993; Brilliant, 2000; Williams & Butler, 2003; Yeh & Inose, 2002).

Global Nomads

Global nomads are also referred to as Third Culture Kids (TCKs) (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) or as Internationally Mobile (IM) (Gerner et al., 1992). Pollock and Van Reken define a TCK as:

> a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated in the TCK's life experience, the sense of belongingness is in relationship to others of similar background (p.19).

Examples include students who accompany their parents who work internationally as missionaries, Peace Corps volunteers, military personnel, Foreign Service personnel, or international business employees. High school foreign exchange students who live for a year in another country also fall within the definition of global nomads. Foreign exchange students live with an exchange family and attend school in their host country. Foreign exchange students who choose a shorter program (i.e., summer) are not included within the definition, as two months does not qualify as a significant part of developmental years. These international experiences provide exposure, appreciation, and some level of acceptance and belonging into a variety of cultures. Global nomads recognize that permanence in international cultures is not inevitable or automatic. As time progresses, global nomads make deeper friendships with others who have significant international experiences rather than with those who do not (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Smith, 1996; Unseem & Cottrell, 1996).

The most significant aspect of growing up as a global nomad is living in at least two different cultures. This is what differentiates the global nomad experience from families who might move frequently but stay within the same culture. It should be noted that not all individuals who travel and live internationally experience the world cross-culturally. Some people find an enclave of their own culture or nationality and do not venture beyond that. These individuals are not considered global nomads, since they may well return from their experience without being impacted by the host culture. People also can experience the world cross-culturally without international travel, by living in and experiencing two distinct cultures within their own country.

Research about this group of students is scarce. No articles could be found reflecting quantitative or qualitative studies specifically of foreign exchange students. The first section of this article therefore includes information from the broader population of global nomads. Theoretically, the information should be valid for the subgroup of foreign exchange students, but research is needed on the specific population of foreign exchange students to verify this. The literature on global nomads does not differentiate between the ages at which international experiences began. Foreign exchange students' international experience is limited to their adolescent years, while global nomads may begin their international experience any time during their childhood or adolescence. It is not clear what impact timing may have on the developmental issues addressed.

Two quantitative studies have been completed with students in international schools (Gerner et al., 1992; Werkman, Farley, Butler & Quayhagen, 1981). These studies both compared students attending international schools with students attending

U.S. high schools. Gerner et al. developed a survey with subscales of Family Relationship, Peer Relationship, Cultural Acceptance, Language Acceptance, Travel Orientation, Future Orientation, and Stereotype Scale. The survey was administered to 854 students attending two large international schools in Bangkok and in Cairo, and their results were compared to 222 students attending high school in a small Midwestern U.S. town. While this study is extensive, the comparison between the large urban international schools and the small Midwestern town could be problematic. Werkman et al. also developed a survey utilizing sentence completion and semantic differential pairings that 148 U.S. students attending four international schools and 96 students attending two suburban Colorado schools completed. The latter study matched their populations for SES, age, gender, and parental marital status.

One large study (n=604) of adults who completed a qualitative survey about growing up with global nomad childhood or adolescent experiences is among the most extensive, but is limited by the reflexivity of the information (Unseem & Cottrell, 1996). Pollack and Van Reken (2001) have written and presented extensively about the global nomad population. Their work is based both on quantitative survey results (n=282), on personal experience, and on consultation with hundreds of global nomads over a twenty five year period. From these various sources, we know that global nomads have unique experiences and characteristics that can set them apart from other students in the school setting. Results of the aforementioned studies are discussed throughout the rest of this paper.

Shared Experiences: Growing Up in a Cross-Cultural World

The experience of living in two cultures during one's developmental years may affect personal identity development. The process of learning a culture is an osmotic process for most people who grow up in one cultural environment. Children learn culture through family, school, media, community, and peers. Unconsciously, people develop an almost intuitive sense of what is right, humorous, appropriate, or offensive in any particular situation, without necessarily being formally taught these things. Likewise, other established norms that are not taught, such as comfort zones with physical distance, eye contact, and vocal tones, can vary between different cultures (Geertz, 1973).

Individuals who have grown up in two cultures are typically more aware of the differences and similarities that exist among groups of people. While the learning of the second (or third) culture might also take place informally, there is a clear awareness that differences exist among cultures. Global nomads experience shifting cultures and behavioral norms each time they move. The combination of moving, which alters relationships with others, and shifting cultures, which alters accepted behavioral norms, presents multiple challenges. Identity development from a socio-cultural approach is considered a process of social interaction, context, and feedback. From this perspective, a change in the feedback about oneself from the external culture will predictably result in a shift in one's sense of identity (Kroger, 2000). Thus, students who have experienced living in a variety of cultures have experienced disruptions in their identity development process.

Additionally, global nomads experience a different sense of belonging than do most other children (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Depending on how many places and years have been spent in any country, a question of physical belonging can arise. For many global nomads, the question "Where are you from?" is not a simple one. For a Kenyan diplomatic family that just moved from Thailand to Washington, D.C., the answer might be, "From Kenya." However, that family may no longer have a permanent home in Kenya because the family may not have lived there for the past ten years or so. A more immediate response reflecting where the family moved from would garner the answer, "From Thailand." Yet the family is not Thai. Some global nomads have spent more time in countries other than the one that has furnished their passport. In this situation, a sense of belonging to the world or to the larger agency (e.g., military, religious mission, company) can be stronger than the sense of belonging to the home country or culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

The concepts of learned cultures and belonging interact with how people fit in physically and intellectually. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) introduced a configuration that represents four possible interaction relational patterns. The patterns rely on the notion that a nationality or culture has a particular *look*, which is of course simplistic, but serves a purpose for understanding the process of relating to a culture. In the first pattern, people look like they fit into the culture, and are actually from that culture, so their thoughts and actions fit the culture as well. This is a *mirror* experience, and is the one in which many children grow up. The second pattern, *foreigner,* consists of people who are obviously physically different from their surroundings, and also do not match the culture in thought and action. An example would be a Caucasian American living in

Nigeria. In the third pattern, *hidden immigrant*, people might look as if they fit in, but may not speak the language or understand the culture. For example, Chinese-Americans who travel to China can experience this situation. In the fourth pattern, *adopted*, people look different from the population but actually think and act similarly. People who have grown up in a country different from their native country can experience this status. While many children grow up in a mirror situation of relating most often with people who look and think similarly to themselves, global nomads can grow up experiencing all four of the relational patterns, frequently experiencing the mirror pattern less than the other three.

Shared Experiences: Growing Up in a Highly Mobile Environment

Many global nomad families move often, sometimes every year or every two or three years (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Each time a family moves, its members are returned to a situation in which they rely heavily upon each other. This affects the family dynamics and the level of independence (Eakin, 1996), which is covered in a later section. Some of the common approaches to these moves are the focus of this section.

Typical coping strategies that global nomads adopt to handle moves and transitions in their lives include: (a) loosening emotional ties and detaching from those who are not accompanying them before the actual move so that it will not hurt as much; (b) denying their feelings of loss, grief, and unfinished business, which can then resurface later in life; and (c) becoming more self-centered in the immediate transition, as the experience of new surroundings temporarily creates feelings of dependency (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

When entering a new community, global nomads may transition by a combination of dichotomous strategies. They may initially be hesitant to join in the new community because of a fear of recurring hurt when forced to leave; alternatively, they may jump in very quickly to the new community in an effort to establish the ties and support needed. In relation to the community they left, they may talk often about the culture left behind in order to keep it alive; conversely, they may refuse to talk about their past life because it is too unique. This is especially prevalent when returning to or entering a community that is not primarily populated by global nomads, or when the global nomad student is particularly concerned with fitting in or appearing arrogant (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Some students, in their attempt to find friends, end up finding friends who are also considered *misfits*, but are misfits for different reasons (Pollock & Van Reken; Smith, 1996).

Typical Characteristics of Global Nomads

While there is wide variation within the global nomad population, just as in any population, there are some characteristics that seem to be common among those people who grow up as global nomads. Some of the common characteristics exhibit themselves after adolescence. Examples include continued international and foreign language involvement as adults (Gerner et al., 1992) and higher likelihood of joining a career that utilizes multiple languages, especially among women (Gerner & Perry, 2000); a higher level of education compared to the general population (81% earned college degrees and half of those have also completed advanced degrees) (Unseem & Cottrell, 1999); a sense of restlessness and continued mobility throughout life (Unseem

& Cottrell, 1996). Common characteristics exhibited in adolescence include adaptability, independence and family orientation, and isolation.

Adaptability. Global nomad teenagers are consistently found to be more adaptable and accepting of cultural differences than their peers who do not have international experience (Gerner et al., 1992; Hayden & Thompson, 1995; Unseem & Cottrell, 1996). Global nomads are found to be more likely to utilize positive restructuring when presented with challenges, which is a related aspect to adaptability (Werkman et al., 1981).

Independence and Family Orientation. Independence and family orientation are two characteristics very intertwined during adolescence, and are considered concurrently in this section.

Anecdotal and clinical generalities predicted that global nomad children and adolescents should be more independent than their peers (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Werkman et al., 1981). However, there were no statistically significant differences found among global nomad students at two international schools and students at a U.S. Midwestern suburban school when questioned about family relationships (e.g., enjoy spending time with family, close to family) and peer relationships (e.g., worry about losing friends, reluctant to form close friendships) (Gerner et al., 1992). Global nomad adolescents were found to have a more external locus of control and reported their greatest strength in intrapersonal relationships (e.g., self-knowledge, independence, persistence) compared to interpersonal relationships (e.g., getting along with others, making friends). Global nomads reported a less important relationship with their

mothers when compared to American peers matched in socioeconomic status, parental marital status, age, gender and academic level (Werkman et al.).

The fact that research findings did not yield significant differences in these characteristics of global nomads and non-global nomad students may be a result of poor conceptualization of the term independence, different ways of surveying students, and the time differences among research studies (e.g., 1981 versus 1992). Peer relationships may be interpreted differently in the two quantitative studies, which were completed by adolescents in the midst of their international experience, and the two qualitative studies, which were completed primarily by adults. A strong focus on a particular type of international family may also affect the results. For instance, one study suggested significant differences in family relationships between missionary children and those whose parents worked in other business areas (Gerner et al., 1992). Military, diplomatic, business, and educational families may all offer their own intricacies involving aspects of both independence and family orientation.

Other areas of research have relied on qualitative methodologies such as interviews and retrospective responses from adults regarding their childhood and adolescence. From these studies, Pollock and Van Reken (2001) indicate that many global nomads experience *uneven maturity*. Global nomads reported feeling more mature than their peers in some areas, yet less mature in others. Many also experience a delayed adolescence, which then manifests itself in college or early adulthood (Unseem & Cottrell, 1996). This uneven maturity in global nomad students could also play a role in the issues of independence and family orientation.

Areas in which global nomad adolescents are generally more mature than their peers include: possessing more knowledge of the world and a broad variety of other topics; an enhanced ability to handle themselves in a variety of different environments (including being alone); having faced a variety of new situations and challenges; and being exposed to a higher level of autonomy than their peers (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Alternatively, compared to their peers, global nomad adolescents can experience difficulties in maintaining strong long-term relationships, be less competent in decision making (e.g., major life decisions have been made by others), and frequently have been thrown back into situations in which they became dependent on their parents again until they gained friends and learned, for instance, the transportation, monetary, and educational systems of the host country (Pollock & Van Reken).

While the research on the immediacy of family relationships during adolescence is inconclusive, research conducted by Unseem and Cottrell (1999) surveying adults who grew up as global nomads indicated that 80% of adult global nomads married, and 66% of those who married did so only once. The commitment to family and marriage indicated by this finding is not reflected in the general U.S. population. While many questions still remain about the process of family impact on adolescent global nomads, it appears that the long-term impact is a family orientation that supports and encourages marriage and discourages divorce.

Isolation. The sense of global nomads feeling different from their peers is potentially a life long process, but can be especially difficult during adolescence, when the pressure to fit in with a crowd is usually at its highest point. Many global nomads report never feeling at home anywhere (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Smith, 1996;

Unseem & Cottrell, 1996). Indeed, this is the origin of the term *third culture*. The reference is not to a culture rooted in a place or even to a group of people who practice similar lifestyles. Rather, it is in reference to an interstitial culture shared by those people who have grown up between and among cultures (Unseem & Cottrell). Many global nomads experience a deep sense of belonging only among other people who have international experience, even if the countries involved in these experiences do not overlap (Pollock & Van Reken; Smith; Unseem & Cottrell). Interestingly, research conducted with adolescents in the midst of their global nomad experiences did not focus on the issue of isolation. This issue is most likely to affect the global nomad student at the time of re-entry, or returning to the home country after an international experience (Pollock & Van Reken; Smith; Unseem & Cottrell).

Global nomads' sense of uniqueness also contributes to the potential for arrogance. Some global nomads are actually arrogant about their experiences, becoming impatient with individuals who see only one perspective when the global nomad can see two or more. More often, however, global nomads are seen as arrogant through misinterpretation (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Talking about an international life to those who have not experienced it can be interpreted by others as arrogant, when the global nomad is actually simply describing life as it is known and experienced, without any intention of arrogance. Being misinterpreted in this way leaves many global nomads with the sense that they are best off not talking about their international life, which in turn devalues their own life story (Pollock & Van Reken; Smith; Unseem & Cottrell).

School counselors are in a unique position to provide support for global nomad students. Navigating adolescence is not an easy task for many students, and for global nomads who potentially have additional concerns in the areas of identity development, family separation, and social acceptance, it becomes even more challenging. School counselors, who are well equipped to cultivate existing positive attributes to support students in challenging situations, can help global nomads develop their adaptability and educational assets successfully.

Foreign Exchange Students

Foreign exchange students represent a sub-set of global nomads. Rather than moving with their own families and possibly moving from one country to another throughout their lives, foreign exchange students typically move on their own into a family and school in their host country for a year, and then return to their native country. Exchange programs also provide opportunities for summers or semesters, but this article focuses on the year-long experience in accordance with Pollock and Van Reken's (2001) definition indicating a significant part of his or her developmental years' spent in another culture.

A review of the literature suggests that no scholarly journals have published research on this specific population of students. The information presented here is about the programs and support that schools and school counselors can provide for foreign exchange students, based on background information and recommended procedures related to program requirements, global nomads, transitions, and culture shock.

Foreign Exchange Programs

All exchange programs must follow guidelines established though the U.S. State Department. Additionally, foreign exchange programs can voluntarily apply for endorsement by CSIET, a non-profit agency founded in 1984 designed to monitor programs serving high school students (ages 15-18 1/2).

> The mission of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is to identify reputable international youth exchange programs, to promote international youth exchange, and to provide leadership and support to the exchange and education communities so that youth are provided with meaningful and safe international exchange experiences (CSIET, 2003, p.1).

CSIET provides a yearly advisory list of programs that meet its standards. The list is mailed to all U.S. public and private high schools annually and is also available on the CSIET web-site (www.csiet.org).

Foreign exchange programs for high school students started after World War II as an effort to encourage increased international understanding. Until 1963, only five programs sponsored exchanges, and then six additional programs were established from 1964-1974. In 1979 there were a total of 17 programs. Between 1980 and 2003, an additional 45 programs began sponsoring exchanges, for a total of 62 (CSIET, 2003). According to the CSIET executive director, in 2003 at least 22,606 international students attended U.S. secondary schools for either one semester or one year, and at least an additional 3,420 U.S. students participated in exchanges that include school attendance (J. Hishmeh, personal correspondence, June 20, 2003). These numbers represent only the students in programs endorsed through the CSIET in 2002. Clearly,

the population of students participating in international exchange programs has grown and will continue to impact students and schools.

Placing Foreign Exchange Students in Schools

Students arriving with a sponsoring foreign exchange program are assigned to a local representative who oversees their placement and progress throughout their stay. According to State Department guidelines, programs need to have a local representative within 150 miles of any U.S. host family (Program Administration #2, 22CFR 62.25 Section D, per personal correspondence, K. Hopkins, Oct.1, 2003). Placement in a particular school should be requested as part of the process of matching a student and a family. In other words, the placement with a family should not be completed without an agreement of acceptance to the local school. The placement procedure should, preferably, take place prior to the student's departure from the home country. As a result of increased security concerns, visa regulations are becoming more stringent, including embassy or consulate interviews in many cases. This process may slow down the visa process and decrease the amount of time that programs have to place students.

The application to a school should include at least the following information: the student's original academic transcript and one translated into English, an explanation of the home country education system so the transcript can be interpreted in context, necessary medical history including proof of immunizations, and an indication of the English language proficiency. CSIET requires exchange programs to select students with "adequate English language proficiency to function successfully" (CSIET, 2003, p.142). Although this requirement may be interpreted in a variety of ways, the school

official can ask for the specifics of the requirement and of the proficiency assessment used by the program. Schools may establish their own level of proficiency as deemed appropriate. The school has no obligation to provide any special services, tutoring, supplies or equipment. If English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tutoring is needed, for example, the program organization will make arrangements and ensure that the student accepts financial responsibility (CSIET, 2003). A school or system is advised to have one individual designated to accept foreign exchange students, and this individual should be available in the summer.

Counselors are frequently involved with placing exchange students in classes and discussing extracurricular activities. Programs endorsed by CSIET are not allowed to guarantee either sports participation or graduation to their students. These decisions are left up to the school the student attends. Most states have regulations regarding sports participation for international students, and many require that students be involved in a CSIET endorsed program in order to participate in varsity sports. The country of origin may dictate academic and graduation requirements, so sensitivity to context is requested when making academic placements. For students to make a smooth transition returning to their own educational system, they may be required to have particular certification or coursework. Verification of home country school system expectations and required documentation can be obtained from the program representative.

School-Program Communication

The program representative should “maintain regular communication with school authorities” (CSIET, 2002, p.144). Endorsed program representatives are required to

have a minimum of monthly contact with the exchange students and family, but the regularity of contact with the school is not stipulated. Each student has a local representative; the school should have a record of the local representative to contact in case of problems. If there are problems or concerns with a particular student, both the host parent and the program representative should be contacted immediately. If there is a concern about a program or a program representative, either the program or CSIET should be contacted immediately. The safety net of support established through cooperation between school, family, and program is needed for successful continuation of foreign exchanges.

Understanding Culture Shock

Foreign exchange students make a tremendous adjustment in a short amount of time. They leave behind everything with which they are familiar. They move into a new family, a new educational system, and a new culture. School personnel working with exchange students should understand and utilize the Culture Shock Model to support students in the process, and to enable host school students understanding of the adjustment process of their new friend or sibling. Culture shock acknowledges a sudden immersion into uncertainty whereby people cannot automatically predict what is expected of them or of what they can expect from others. The model describes a typical adjustment pattern, which any given individual may experience in his or her own time frame and unique pattern. The typical pattern starts with a *honeymoon* period in which everything is exciting, new, and positive. After a while, however, the student enters the *disintegration* period and may begin to question and/or criticize the practices, processes, and norms of the new culture. This time may be difficult for families and

friends if they are not open to hearing that other approaches may indeed have much to offer. If the student does not have a supportive outlet, he or she can experience loneliness, helplessness, or depression. Occasionally, the student may become angry at various new expectations and experience some alienation and hostility. Ideally, this time is a process of sharing and accepting that no country, culture, family, or system has 100% of the answers to all life issues. The student then moves into the *reintegration and balanced* periods in which he or she hopefully spends the bulk of the exchange time. The student adapts to the new roles and expectations of the host family and country, and seems to blend in to the new culture (Pedersen, 1994; Pedersen, 1995). Finally, preparing to leave is frequently a difficult and confusing time for the exchange student. Many programs are now offering a *Re-entry Orientation* for students as they prepare to return to their home countries. For school counselors, it is important to recognize that this is an emotional time for those preparing to leave and to be left behind.

Since there is no published research on foreign exchange students, it is not clear whether the same issues found to effect global nomads also effect foreign exchange students. Certainly there are differences in the experiences, namely the defined time period and the additional adjustment to a new family associated with foreign exchange programs. Global nomad and foreign exchange students bring tremendous resources and experiences to our schools, and hopefully school personnel can help find avenues to advocate for fully integrating the students' backgrounds productively within the school.

Discussion

It is important for school counselors, as well as other school personnel, to recognize the many unique aspects of the global nomad experience in whatever form their students experience it. One way this knowledge can help is, of course, to offer support for those students in our schools who have this background. Understanding the combination of culture shock, the potential of uneven maturity, and the sense of uniqueness that these students experience in our schools will help us to provide appropriate support.

With the many demands on school counselor time, when a student enters our school with an experience that can arguably be considered advantaged, it is somewhat natural to assume that the student will find his or her own way and not need support. Some schools may actually serve a large number of global nomads, so their experiences may not be considered unique by others, and the transition may be easier. However, especially in a situation where this background is unique or rare, counselors are advised to be alert for signs that the global nomad might be isolated or adjusting in problematic ways. It is understood that people are social and want to develop relationships with peers. Isolated students can seek out and develop relationships with other isolated students. Global nomads may be coming from cultures with very different norms and/or laws regarding gender roles, alcohol use, and drug use, among others. Some of these norms/laws may be considered stricter than U.S. norms/laws, while others may be more lenient. Either way, adolescents who are negotiating their own personal norms within their cultural norms may end up experimenting with these potentially harmful or illegal substances and practices, either as a way to fit in, or in the

developmental process of defining their identity. Hopefully, counselors can recognize and support students in this potentially difficult transition period.

Supporting these students can also help support the school. Global nomad students, because of their strengths in adaptability, flexibility, autonomy, and cross-cultural abilities, can be a tremendous asset to any school population, so supporting current global nomads and encouraging more students to become global nomads will provide a service to the school community. Global nomad families decide where to live and have their children attend schools, and if a school counselor from a particular school expresses understanding and appreciation of the unique aspects of the global nomad life, families may be more likely to select that school. School counselors should advocate for U.S. students to consider foreign exchange student programs, and should ensure that the school system enables this choice by accepting credits from international schools and allowing appropriate flexibility in meeting requirements. Students who make the choice to become foreign exchange students should not have to extend their education. If the student completes an exchange year or semester and returns to the U.S. high school, that student will hopefully have a positive impact on the rest of the student body by serving as a role model for adaptability, open-mindedness and acceptance, and increased communication abilities. School counselors should also advocate for foreign exchange students attending their schools. Foreign exchange students, as well as other global nomads returning to the U.S., may serve as role models for the student body in the same ways as the returning exchange student does. Everyone in a school can benefit from communicating with people who have

experienced various approaches to life and to education; this is the epitome of multicultural education (Pedersen, 1994).

Clearly, our schools, our society, and our world can benefit tremendously from international exposure. As increasing numbers of adolescents participate in international living, either with their family or as foreign exchange students, more information is needed regarding the developmental effects. Further research is needed on this special population of students and adolescents. Counselors, counselor educators, educational researchers, and educators in all areas are advised to continue conducting rigorous research studies on the effects of international living at all stages of life. Many questions still exist regarding the role of culture in identity development, the development of independence in the process of crossing cultures, and many other areas of personal and family impact for the population of global nomads and the sub-group of foreign exchange students.

Implications and Recommendations for School Counselors

All global nomads have the potential to be an asset in any school, especially through their abilities to bridge cliques and cultures, their focus on continued education, their adaptability, and their openness to new experiences. Because of global nomads' ability to blend in and their apparent ease with transitions, counselors and teachers might assume that global nomads are adapting to their new school. This may be the case, but because of the complexity of their experiences, they may not be as comfortable in their new surroundings as they appear to be.

Further research is needed, particularly with foreign exchange students. As indicated earlier, research is scarce and each of the previously conducted research

programs has its own limitations. Research on the impact of both student age during international moves and frequency of moves could help us more fully understand the effects of this style of life on children and adolescents. Research on global nomad families and vocational affiliations could provide insight into the complex process of individuation. Longitudinal research with this population could provide information about adjustment and cultural competence. Qualitative research conducted during international living experiences could help understand the influence and learning of culture and the immediate impact of cultural transitions. Research on current and best practices of supporting global nomad and foreign exchange students would provide counseling and support models.

From the current information presented in this article, school counselors may consider the following recommendations to support global nomad students as they transition into schools in the U.S. The first two recommendations are specific to foreign exchange students; the last eight are applicable to all global nomad students, including foreign exchange students.

1. Based on their standards designed to protect students, families, and schools, accept foreign exchange students from and encourage students to participate in only CSIET endorsed programs.
2. Schools are advised to assign a person as the school liaison for all exchange students if the school has more than one such student, so that communication regarding exchange students can be localized and focused. Acceptance is an administrative decision; the liaison process is ongoing and supportive. Many schools assign an administrator to handle admissions, and

a counselor as the liaison. The school liaison should discuss the expected frequency of communication with the program representative.

3. Many other countries either do not have school counselors or define different roles to school counselors. Be very specific about your role and the support that you can offer to the student and family.
4. Talk with the student and the parents about their understanding and expectations of the U.S. school system. The norms and cultures of schools vary around the world and within the U.S., and everyone will benefit from a clear understanding of your school's norms. If differences are not obvious, ask the family or student to discuss their experiences in various schools and provide some insight about your school in relation to each of the items mentioned. Help parents understand that they are welcome in the school and encouraged to talk with teachers and counselors.
5. Identify a mentor for the global nomad students in your school. Preferably, this might be an older global nomad student or staff member, or a student who crosses cliques in your school. If appropriate, educate the mentor about culture shock patterns and the possible entering strategies that global nomads might use.
6. Meet with global nomad students frequently during their first semester in the new school to talk about adjustment and to monitor the strategies that the students are using. If they are not comfortable talking with their peers about their international experiences because of uniqueness or presumed

arrogance, offer them the opportunity to talk about their lives and experiences individually with you.

7. Allow the students to monitor how much or how often they are asked to speak about their experiences. Civic clubs, language, and history classes sometimes request students to talk about other countries and cultures. For some students, this is an activity that sets them apart in a seemingly negative way. For others, this is a positive outlet that allows them to validate their experiences. Some foreign exchange programs may set this as an expectation for their students, particularly if the agency has offered a sponsoring scholarship.
8. Introduce global nomad students to programs and activities that are aimed at improving diversity within the school system. These are situations in which students are likely to feel most comfortable and will utilize and enhance their skills. Such activities will also provide students an avenue to meet friends who have similar values, if not similar experiences.
9. Talk frankly about the coping strategies frequently used. If two people are using opposite strategies (e.g., one is hesitating to join in the new community as a protective mechanism, another trying to jump in quickly), they will alienate each other unknowingly. If they are able to recognize the patterns, they will be more likely to understand each other and become friends. Similarly, if students preparing to leave are pulling away from their friends to avoid the pain of separation, discussing this can be beneficial.

10. Be especially aware of students who have U.S. passports but have not lived in the U.S. for a number of years and of foreign students who are returning to their home country. Students often anticipate that re-entry to their own country will be an easier transition than other moves, when in actuality, it is frequently the hardest. Students believe that they will be *home* but find that they are not in tune with their peers. Their sense of uniqueness intensifies. In other words, they believe they will have mirror relationships, and end up being hidden immigrants in their own country of origin. Most international schools, and international exchange programs, have found that re-entry orientations are vital for their students.

Most school counselors want to have a positive influence on the lives of the students with whom they work. In many U.S. schools, the global nomad population may be a small percentage of the student population. Having a positive influence on this group of students, however, impacts not only the student, but the rest of the community in very positive ways. International diversity and acceptance currently garners little attention in the area of multiculturalism, but is at the forefront of our future.

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Biographical Statement

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