

Beyond Borders: Cultivating Global Competence in Third Culture Kids

Scott Murphy

Brisbane Boys' College, Australia

Abstract:

In my role as Acting Headmaster at an elite school in Brisbane, and with over 20 years of teaching experience, 10 of which have been abroad, I have gained valuable insights into supporting the wellbeing and adaptation of internationally mobile staff and students. My paper draws from research conducted at an international school in Singapore, highlighting best practices for fostering academic, social, and emotional growth in TCKs.

In response to the increasing trend of global relocations, international P-12 school communities play a crucial role in supporting the education and wellbeing of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). These children, who frequently transition across cultures, face unique challenges that schools must address to ensure their successful adaptation. Extensive literature highlights the importance of implementing effective transition programs to help TCKs overcome these challenges and leverage their strengths.

Leadership is pivotal in the success of these programs. By sharing experiences with other leaders in different organizations, we can learn from each other and refine our approaches to best support TCKs.

A qualitative study, conducted in 2023 at an international school in Singapore, employed surveys, observations, and literature analysis to investigate the impact of a well-executed transition program on the academic and emotional wellbeing of TCKs. The research revealed that a comprehensive transition program, responsive to the multifaceted needs of TCKs at various stages of relocation, is essential for their successful adaptation in foreign educational settings.

By assessing the interdependence of school leadership and strategic support for TCKs, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on transition programs. The findings underscore the pivotal role of schools in fostering the academic wellbeing and social integration of TCKs, offering valuable insights for educators and leaders in international school contexts.

This presentation will provide educators with practical insights and proven strategies to support the wellbeing and adaptation of TCKs, drawing from my vast leadership experience. I firmly believe that the wellbeing of all students is paramount to their learning and success, and every child deserves