

Lost in transition: From adolescent to global citizen

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During my 15 years as an International Student Adviser, every semester I see young, mainly Asian, students who have failed almost everything – usually more than once. They come in at the last minute and as a last resort. Aside from failing, the characteristic they share is that they are scared:

Scared of going home

Scared of the challenges of university

Scared of talking to anyone

Scared of the future

Scared of their parents

Before they tell me, I now know that what they all have in common is that they did one or more years of high school here before starting university.

What happened to these students? Where are the bi-lingual, bi-cultural, confident global citizens implied in the ads for international secondary education? Of course, those who handle the challenges of international schooling are out there, but I don't see the successes in my office.

My social work in substitute family care lead me back to look at adolescent stages of development and what can affect this development and impact on adaptability. A key point that emerged is that successful navigation into young adulthood is related to the relationship with parents.

The aim of this paper is information sharing and discussion to assist us in the early identification and intervention with this group of at risk students.