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We have covered personal [experiences of senior professionals getting to International work environments](http://www.experteer-blog.com/magazine/international-experiences/) and all of them have stressed on the importance of adapting to new cultures when in a new location. Many senior professionals tend to get to the US and [Germany](http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1517363/germany-overtakes-britain-and-canada-become-worlds-no-2-migration) – these being the top two big destinations for expats and senior professionals currently. Expat learning is not an easy topic because everyone coming to a new country comes with a set of expectations that vary.

It is quite easy to say that one must ‘integrate’ with local culture to feel better in a new country. Although, with multiple work responsibilities, it keeps getting harder to implement. While learning a language is a part of the whole cultural integration process, it is often far beyond it.

Specifically, for expats getting to Germany, we got in touch with [Frollein Frullier](http://www.german-by-doing.com/index.php/en/frollein-frullier/). Founded by a German, Annika Groß, this Berlin based start-up that **explores the concept of becoming ‘German by doing’**. The key reason we feature it today really is that, it is a concept where learnings can be applied to other

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countries or cultures as well. Learning by doing is a powerful way to enable multi-cultural learning which goes beyond classroom language trainings, and can completely change the way a senior professional experiences a new culture- most positively also helping them improve their work experiences.

But to get into the real concept, here are some ideas that Annika shared:



- *Experteer:* What is German by doing- How do you define success for an endeavor like this?

German by Doing, Annika: German by doing means learning German at entertaining events (in Berlin). These *Sprachevents* are structured language training mixed with all kinds of leisure and everyday activities. I want to offer an alternative to learning alone with computers or sitting in a class room. It is more effective and fun if you study in a more practical and social way while using all your senses. Success is: Learning clients, laughing clients, clients who feel more relaxed while talking German. And success is when people happily pay me for my self invented **dream job** (<http://www.experteer-blog.com/magazine/tag/elements-of-a-dream-job/>)!

- *Experteer:* What's the most important tip for International people wanting to work or live in

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Germany?

German by Doing, Annika: Hang out with Germans! Many of them might seem reserved at the beginning, but then they become loyal and sensitive friends. So don't hesitate to ask them out. Most of them will be happy, even if they do not ask you. By the way, a great key is learning German ...

- *Experteer:* How does this idea 'by doing' come about and get real?

German by Doing, Annika: Being based in Berlin has been fundamental for my work. A creative, open minded and curious city with interesting places and loads of foreigners is a gift for this kind of activity. My curiosity for other cultures and my passion for traveling and languages help me understand how life as a foreigner is like and how effective it is to learn a language "by doing". From the people around me I get much mental and practical support, and I am extremely grateful, namely to my family, friends and the coaches of the '*garage Berlin*'. In fact, I would love to have a great fitting full time partner who shares the spirit and the passion of German by doing- Frollein Frullier!

Many cultural trainings for expats also emphasize this issue of 'integration' with the local culture by getting involved more aggressively. It is also interesting to share, various models that sort of explain the 'expat journey', for instance, the 'change cycle' highlighting different stages that an expat senior professional may be faced with in a new culture. It is all too easy to be stuck into a 'danger zone' not allowing the experiences to improve and play out. The key of course is almost to constantly remind oneself that it is natural to feel a sense of 'doubt' and uncertainty in a new culture. But moving to a phase of 'understanding' and finally 'integration' is also something professionals can personally take control of.

Learning by doing allows expats to get away from the proverbial 'expat' bubble and develop their own new experiences and positive perceptions of a new culture and country. Expat learning in

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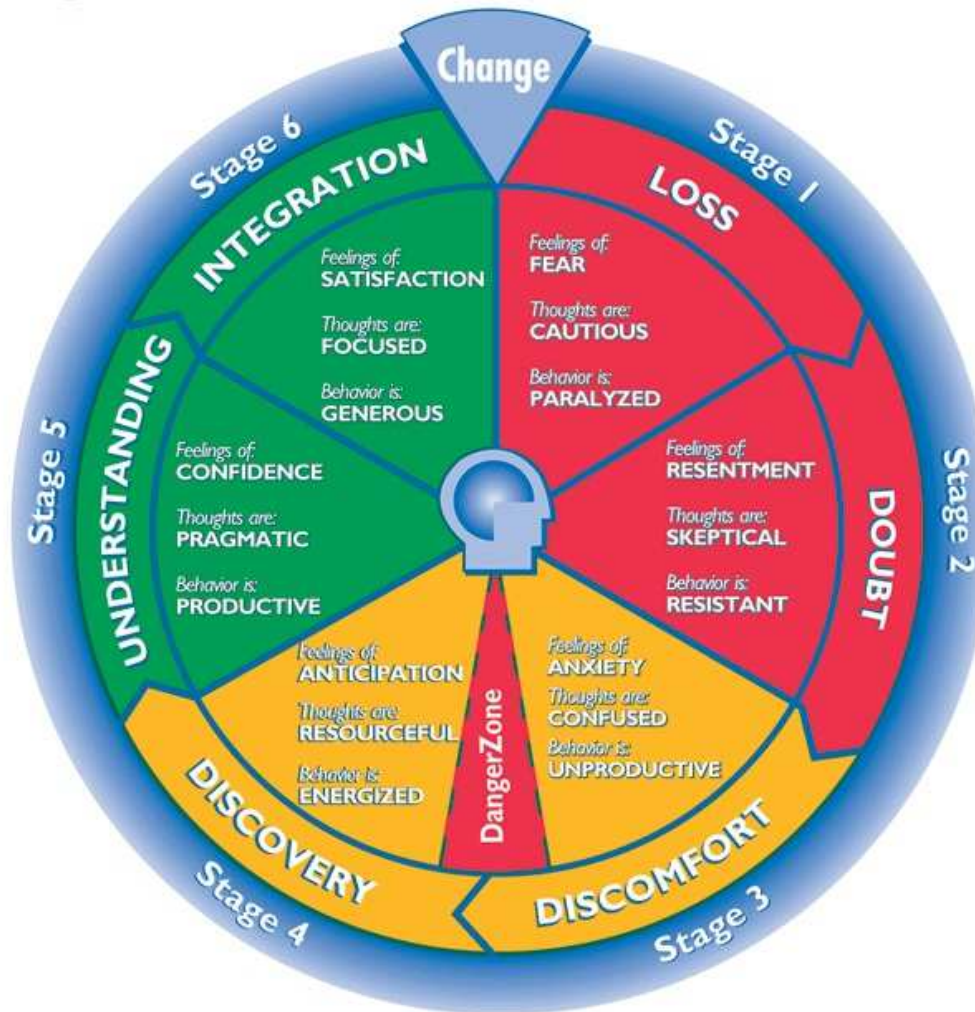
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general can be enhanced multi-fold if one were to be aware of the pitfalls and be more aggressive about avoiding them.



Via & More (<http://www.change-cycle.com/change-cycle.htm>)

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Work culture

Hopefully, some of the expat senior professionals living in Germany can take a cue and enhance their German experiences. We would also like to thank Annika Groß for sharing her ideas with us and allowing us to reinforce this topic of expat learning by doing!

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Upasna Kakroo (<http://www.experteer-blog.com/magazine/author/upasna-kakroo/>)

Content Marketing Manager at Experteer GmbH. (www.experteer.com)

Upasna leads Experteer's 'Content Marketing' initiatives. In Germany, she has previously worked with a Rocket Internet company on online content and branding. She has worked in McKinsey & Co. for over 5 years focusing on online consumer behavior and social. She also worked in the NGO sector in the ICT4D domain. In between, she was in school for her MBA in International Marketing (Germany), M.S. in Tech Policy (U.K.) and B.S. in Electronics Engineering (India). Upasna has authored a book, several papers and been invited to speak in various conferences. At present, she enjoys working on fighting fears people have with digital content. She has been blogging on urban culture and how people alter with digital since 2003.

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'Expat learning: be German by doing' have 2 comments



Ray (<http://www.experteer-blog.com/magazine/expat-learning-german/#comment-248>) August 19, 2014 @ 7:38 pm

Wonderful perspective that I found altogether true as a ex-pat working in Germany back in the late 1980's. By "jumping into the water" and getting fully immersed, I found myself laughing at my mistakes with everyone else ("Ich mochte einbischen abheben" at the bank for example ...) instead of being mortified. (I was in great shape at the time working out with a wrestling club in Halbergmoos, so didn't need to lose a bit of weight!!)

The six stages of the "change cycle" certainly ring true for me! Thanks Anika.

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Vantage Point (<http://www.experteer-blog.com/magazine/expat-learning-german/#comment-257>) August 20, 2014 @ 3:58 pm

Thanks for the heads up Ray! Your language experiment is a great example. I often am personally caught up in the whole adult need to sound perfect in a new language and not make mistakes...Fantastic also to hear that the change cycle worked for you. Here's wishing more expats



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follow your bright example then 😊 ~ Best, Upasna

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