**LESSON PLAN – CULTURAL BRIEFING**

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| **Introduction**  (5 minutes) | What is culture briefing?  Is it identifying and connecting patterns across culture?  (Warm-up conversation.) |
| **Brainstorming**  ( 5 minutes) | -Where would you find the most information?  -What would be the most useful things to know? (Money, housing, geografy, political system, transportation ...) |
| **Video**  (12 minutes) | An American woman living in Prague is giving an advice about life in the Czech Republic.  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9\_55Kpslhw |
| **Discussion**  (13 minutes) | -What do you really have to know before you move to another country?  -Do you understand and respekt the new culture?  -How can you reduce the challenges and stresses of assimilation?  -What could help you to quickly adapt and integrate into the new community?  -How could you effectively navigate through culture differences?. |
| **Reading**  (5 minutes) | How to speed up your integration into a new culture: 12 tips |
| **Summary**  (5 minutes) | -Is it hard to do culture briefing?  -Is it useful? |

**How to speed up your integration into a new culture: 12 tips from a life coach**

Updated: Jan 28, 2021

There are lots of things that one can do to better integrate to a new culture right from the beginning. We asked a life coach, Stela to create a list for our expat community and share her knowledge with us.

The first thing she suggests is to create a vision with one single goal: finding balance within the new boundaries and aiming to leave the past behind.

Find her list of 12 points below to ease into a new life.

## ****1. Learn the language****

This might be more challenging for some than others, but this is a very significant step towards integrating to a new country. The French are especially proud of their language and they are much more likely to help you if you approach them with a French sentence - even if it's not correct. It will be easier to find a job, connect to the locals, deal with the administrative paperwork and so on. Even if you plan to stay only for a short period, show some respect and make the effort to learn the basics.

## ****2. Discover****

Visit the local farmers' market, walk to the post office or bank and spend some time in one of the public gardens. Give yourself enough time to observe the locals, little by little you will understand how everything works.

## ****3. Ask a lot of questions****

There is no stupid question. Engage with the (local) people on your way to somewhere and ask for directions; in a shop ask for more information about their loyalty card; or even start up a conversation at the market about cooking tips. These interactions will make you feel less isolated and help to increase your vocabulary. Plus you might get to know somebody very nice along the way, who becomes your friend.

## ****4. Look for expat groups****

There are plenty of online and offline groups that gather around expats. It could be a big help to get some tips from those who have experienced expatriation already. Sojoourn is the leading networking community and guide for expats in Lyon, France. Check out their [Facebook group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/sojoourncommunity/). But be careful not to fall into the trap of ignoring the locals and focusing only on the expats.

## ****5. Get professional help****

If you can afford it, get professional help from a relocation agency. Their experience and guidance can save you a lot of time. Some even include additional services beside finding your new home or visa procedures, like giving advice about the local schools.

## ****6. Hire household help****

Don't over stress yourself by trying to do everything on your own. If you need to clean a big house after moving in, or packing our hundreds of boxes, get some occasional household help. Many big cities offer a wide choice of service providers: house cleaning, baby-sitting, gardener, seniors’ assistance, etc.

## ****7. Volunteer****

Use some of your free time to give back to the city that took you in. Volunteering can create a sens of purpose and it is a great opportunity to bond with the local community.

## ****8. Take the initiative****

When you meet someone and you feel like you are on the same wavelength, don't be afraid to invite them for a cup of coffee somewhere. The other person might crave human connections the same way as you. But be careful, not everyone feels comfortable being invited back to your house after 5 minutes - don't take it personally.

## ****9. Communicate****

Are you feeling lonely or anxious? Share your feelings and thoughts with your family or friends back at home. Let them know what you would like them to do and how can they help you to feel better. Hiding your feelings is very unproductive and could cause more damage in the long run.

## ****10. Promote yourself****

If you are allowed to work in the new country, plan your networking process. Finding a part-time jobs can also help you start somewhere until you figure out the rest. Think about hiring a career coach if you want to accelerate your job transition and your networking.

## ****11. Stay curious****

Dedicate some time to find new hobbies and to nurture new interests. Volunteer or studies something new that pleases you. Allow yourself to find new joy among the chaos of relocating. It creates purpose and a sense of utility.

## ****12. Don't try to replicate the home you had before****

Move forward, not backward. Don't try to live in your past, once your living conditions or circumstances are different (and it does not mean they are worse). The fastest you accept that many things will change, the fastest you will be opened to welcome the new situation. Those who get stuck in trying to reproduce their former life, loose many opportunities to evolve and create a beautiful new life.

Sources:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9\_55Kpslhw

https://www.sojoourn.fr/post/how-to-speed-up-your-integration-into-a-new-culture