

Helping newcomers adapt to life and work in New Zealand

TESOLANZ AGM 2019

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Outline

What newcomers find challenging/different when adapting to life and work in New Zealand:

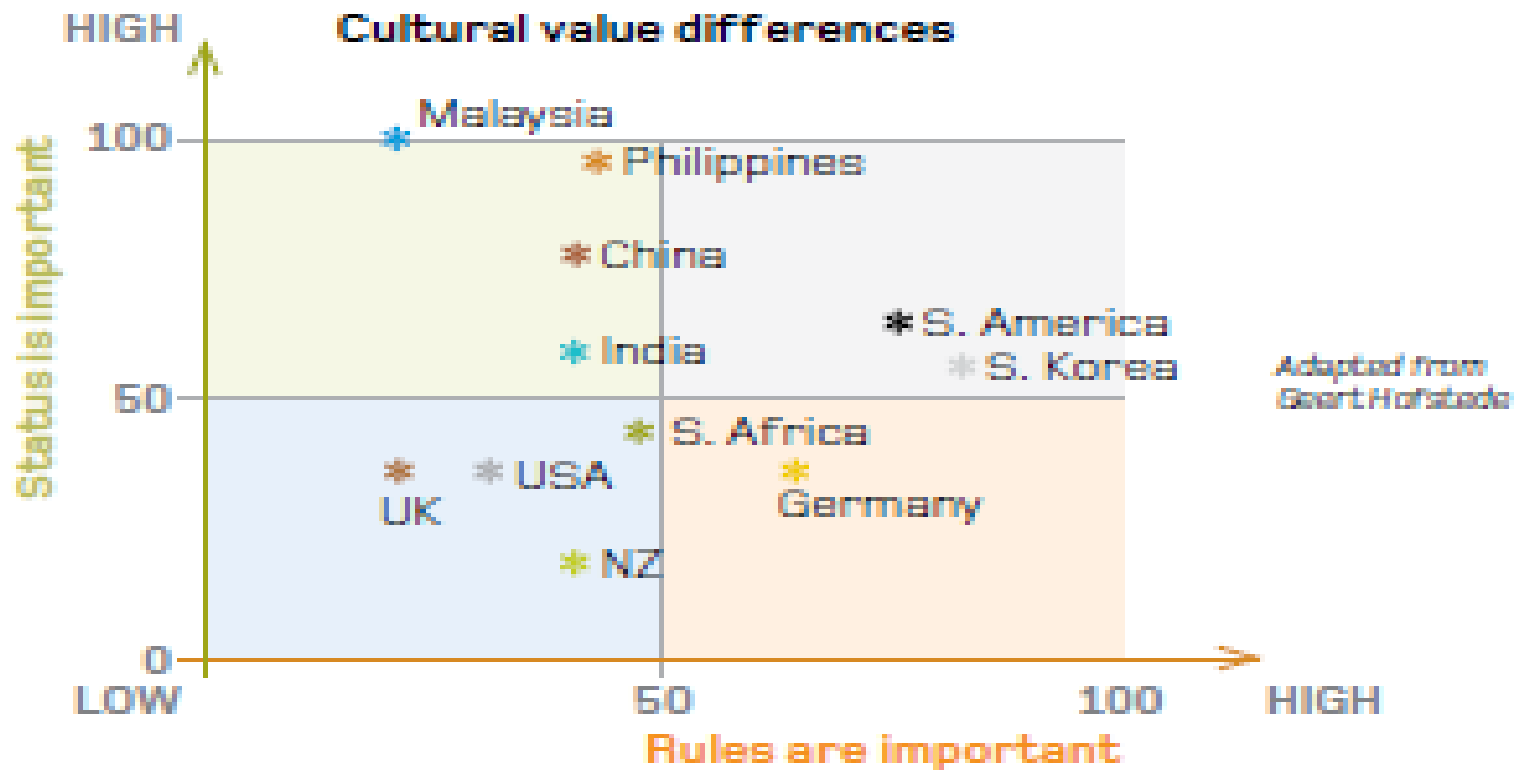
- Understanding NZ workplace culture
- Adapting to the communication style
 - Professional workplace
 - Construction site
- Resources available



Understanding NZ workplace culture



Understanding NZ Workplace Culture: Power/ status distance



Source: Employers Toolkit. 2012. Immigration New Zealand,
https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/files/documents/Newcomers-guide_0.pdf. Adapted from Geert Hofstede (1983).
"Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values". *Administrative Science Quarterly*

Hofstede's dimensions of culture

Hofstede Insights: Retrieved from:

<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/>



Low power distance in NZ

- Flat hierarchy in social and workplace settings
- Senior people help with menial tasks
- Manager sits with team
- Praise more common than criticism
- Informality
- Titles rarely used
- First names often used
- Team work important



Individualism vs Collectivism/ Communitarianism



Features of individualism in the NZ workplace

High level of independence

- Minimal supervision and instructions
- Expectation to show initiative and suggest solutions to problems
- Expectation to have and express own opinions
- Individuals singled out for praise
- Minimal support staff
- Flexible work hours, lunch breaks
- Work/life balance considered important



How different cultures like to be managed

https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/files/documents/Newcomers-guide_0.pdf

The impact of cultural norms on job interview questions/ answers



What do you
consider are the
key qualities of
an effective
manager?





Making sure that my subordinates work effectively and complete their tasks. Sometimes I need to be strict with them and set firm deadlines.

Understanding and adapting to the communication style in the NZ workplace



Language and Culture

Language choices are cultural acts:
'every time we speak we perform a
cultural act' (Kramersch 1993)

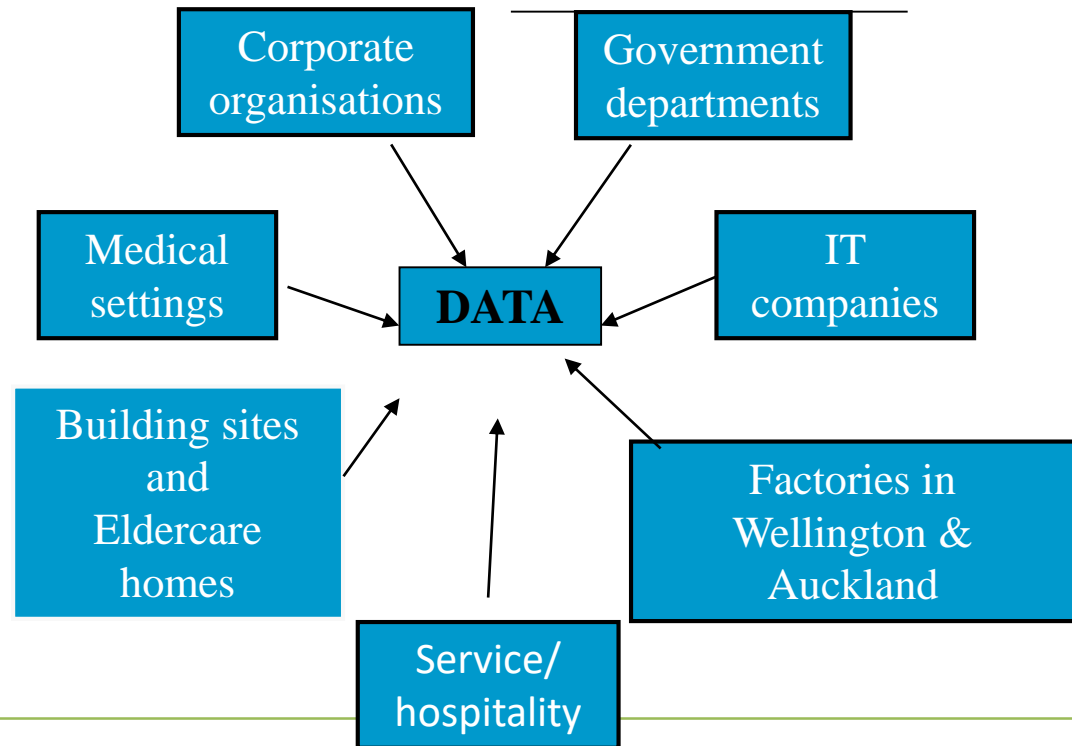
Kramersch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wellington Language in the Workplace Project



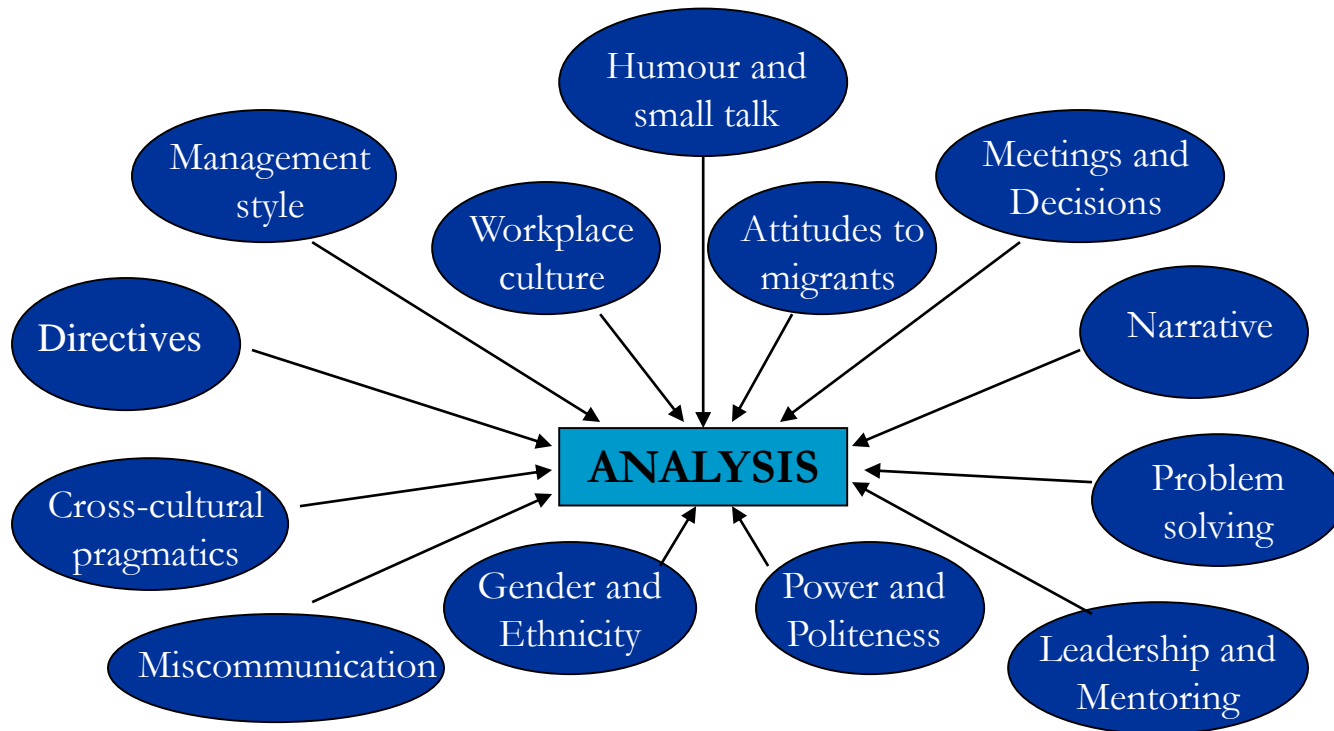
LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE

*Large-scale sociolinguistic
research project
investigating
communication in NZ
workplaces since 1996*



More than 2000 interactions involving approximately 700 participants in 30+ different workplaces

Areas of Analysis



An example from the LWP: Morning Conversation

Diana: Good morning Sally, lovely day.

Sally: Yes, don't know what we're doing here we should be out in the sun.

Diana: Mm, pity about the work really.

Sally: How are your kids?

Diana: Much better thank goodness, any mail?



Holmes, Janet. 2000. Doing collegiality and keeping control at work: Small talk in government departments. In Justine Coupland (ed), *Small Talk*. London: Longman. 32-61.

Using the authentic data in the classroom: Principles of teaching and learning

- Relevant **input**
- Opportunities to **notice** features of input, both linguistic and contextual
- Opportunities to **practise** and get feedback

Kasper, G. 1996. 'Introduction: Pragmatics in SLA' *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18, 145-148

- Meaning-focussed input
- Language-focussed learning
- Meaning-focussed output
- Fluency development

Nation, P. (2007). The Four Strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 1-12.

Example of how small talk from LWP is used in class

Diana: Good morning Sally,
lovely day.

Sally: Yes, don't know what
we're doing here. We
should be out in the sun.

Diana: Mm, pity about the
work really.

Sally: How are your kids?

Diana: Much better than
goodness, any mail?

- **Topic?**
- **Can we tell who is boss?**
- **Evidence of familiarity**
- **Joking with boss is OK in NZ**
- **Who speaks first and why?**
- **Who finishes the small talk?**
- **Note how Diana moves from small talk to work talk**

Used especially to point to relevance of status and familiarity as influences on appropriate patterns of interaction

Is the use of small talk similar in other countries?



Small talk can be problematic



He hates small talk!

"He hates small talk."

A migrant's experience

So a lot of mistakes I made cos like I ... just want to get the work done and ignore the social talk, the small talk. And I work long hours, cos I want to pick up the work quickly. So I make myself always tired and I don't want to talk. [So I was] left out ... yes, in like birthday parties or farewell parties, um happy hours, I can't join in.

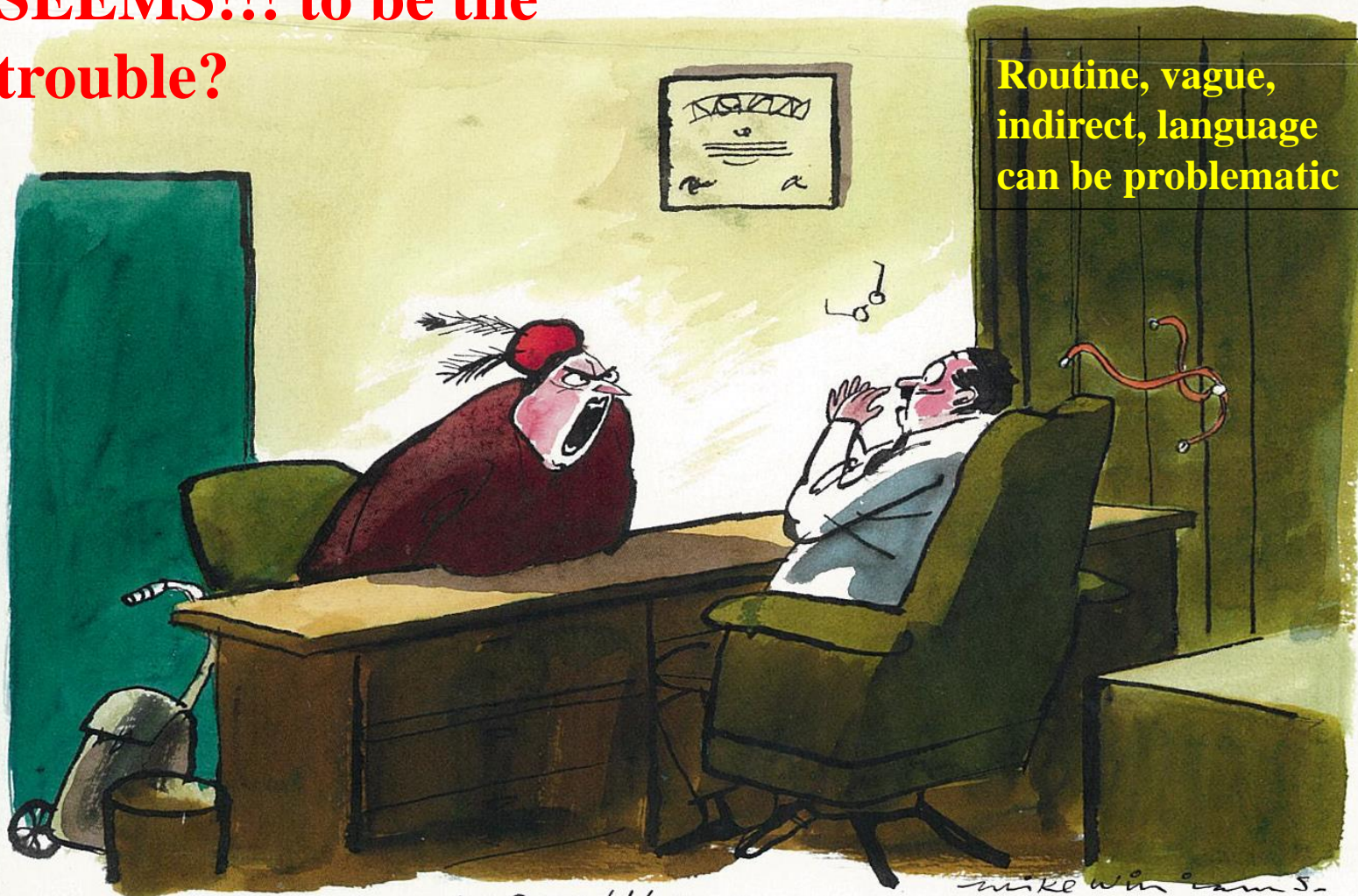


Communication style: Using indirect language

In the NZ professional workplace, indirect language is often used to reduce force of instructions, requests, complaints, refusals.

What do you mean, what
SEEMS!!! to be the
trouble?

Routine, vague,
indirect, language
can be problematic



"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT SEEMS!!! TO BE THE TROUBLE???"

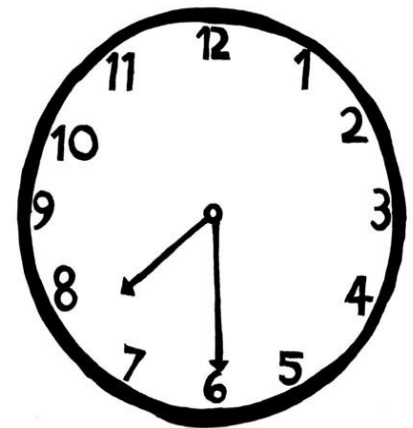
Example from the LWP: A request 'downwards'

The people:

- Kate is a manager in a government department
- Brenda is her personal assistant

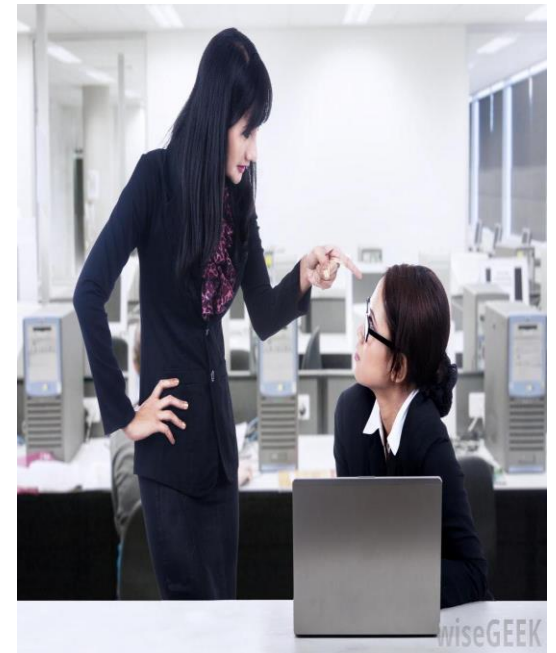
The situation:

- Kate approaches Brenda to ask her to work late today



What might the 'bare' request look like?

“I want you to work late tonight to get the meeting agenda ready for tomorrow”



What was actually said ...

Kate: I know this is a bit last-minute Brenda, but do you think you could possibly stay later tonight? It's just that I need to get the meeting agenda ready for tomorrow.



Analysis of request strategies

Kate: I know this is a bit last-minute Brenda, but do you think you could possibly stay later tonight? It's just that I need to get the meeting agenda ready for tomorrow.

1. Acknowledgement of the imposition
2. Use of indirect request
3. Use of softeners
4. Providing and explanation

Comment from a migrant

In my previous job – it is also an accounting role. But at that job, I don't know how to make a request. And also, how to give a deadline to other people and how to get information from other people. I don't know how to say it, so, because I don't know the technique I waste a lot of time. And also the people don't understand my inside, my strength, they only can see my weakness.

I'm a very polite person ... but I really didn't know how to use English to fit in. Sometimes I used impolite words but I never noticed it. But Kiwis maybe feel 'Oh, I don't want to talk with this kind of person because she is so rude. But actually I am not rude.



Do NZers give feedback about communication style?

Because I found that my colleagues and friends when I ask them for feedback they won't do it. Is it the culture and they don't want to offend people – but for us – we hunger for this. It is good to know – we need that, otherwise we still keep thinking it is ok and then we will use it again and we will never know.





Assisting refugees to find jobs



- Construction sites – learning to be a builder
- Eldercare residences – learning to be a carer

The challenge: learning how to communicate in these jobs in culturally appropriate ways

On the Construction Site: Indirect directive embedded in social talk

Tom: yea

[hammering]

Max: alrighty

Tom: er I think those little foam things go there

B1: nah I quite like it up there eh

Tom: yeah it is quite cool eh

B1: diving and stuff

Tom: yep

Tom: foreman
Max: apprentice
B1: builder



Integration of social and work talk

Tom: oh right yeah um (*pause*)

Max: someone broke their leg hey you got a bottom corrugation

Tom: bottom second down bottom of the corrugation
yeah like bottom of that board

Max: thirty nine

Tom: yeah thirty nine what's someone broke their leg where

Max: oh they were doing like a half time display of people like
parachuting in or like hang-gliding in

Tom: [*laughs*] at the super fourteen game

Max: nah what he was saying
and then some dude like broke his leg

Tom: [*laughs*] oh yeah (*pause*)

Max: do you want to go cut another one I can keep doing this

Tom: yeah OK

Max: I'll just do one now

Materials and recorded dialogues for use by teachers of ESOL learners

Resources available online at:
www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/centres-and-institutes/language-in-the-workplace/resources/teaching-and-learning-resources



Rick and Max



This one?

Do you know how to tell a finishing saw from the other saws?

Yeah, that's a finishing saw. See it's quite small for like, you know, skirting.



What's the best way to do this?



Yeah, just, just hold it level, not like that cos otherwise, you know, it won't end up straight enough.



Migrants and Happiness



Professor Arthur Grimes, Victoria University of Wellington's Chair of Wellbeing and Public Policy

<https://www.victoria.ac.nz/news/2019/05/migrants-and-happiness>

The 2018 World Happiness Report, based on Gallup Poll data covering over 100 countries:

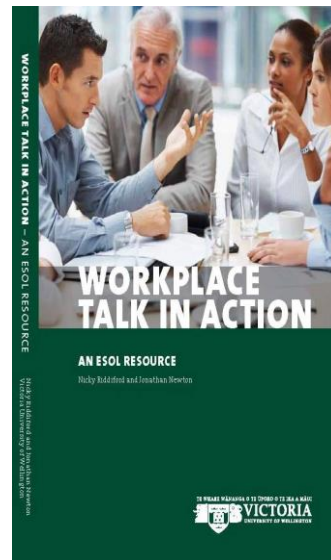
- New Zealand is **5th** in the ranking of happiness of migrants.
- New Zealand and Iceland are neck-in-neck at **the top** of the most accepting countries for migrants.
- Countries which are highly accepting towards migrants tend to have both greater migrant happiness and greater happiness for the domestically-born population.

World Happiness Report 2018: https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEB_enNZ849NZ849&ei=9kydXcHPCTKb9QOT94-gAg&q=world+happiness+report+2018&oq=world+happiness+report+2018&gs_l=psy-ab.1.0.0i67j0l9.13127.13840..15495...0.2..0.251.443.0j1j1.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0i71.yuuG5F63jEQ

Preparing newcomers for NZ workplaces

See

<https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/centres-and-institutes/language-in-the-workplace/resources/teaching-and-learning-resources>



MBIE: Resources for Newcomers in NZ

- Succeeding in job interviews:
www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/interviews
- Riddiford, N. (2017). *Communicating Effectively in a Job Interview: a resource for newcomers to New Zealand*. PDF version available:
www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/interviews
- Finding and applying for jobs:
www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/work-in-nz/finding-work/finding-applyingfor-jobs
- **Worktalk Tool:** <http://worktalk.immigration.govt.nz/>
- A guide for newcomers:
<https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/guide-to-kiwi-workplaces>
- **Employer Toolkit:** <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/employ-migrants/guides/inz2-guides-employer-toolkit.pdf>



Ngā mihi

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Hofstede, G. *Clearly Cultural*. Retrieved April 21, 2015, from

<http://www.clearlycultural.com/geert-hofstede-cultural-dimensions/power-distance-index>

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