

Draft product

Focus area & designer	Focus Area 5 - student experiences for international partners / Friederike Tegge (Rike)
Topic & priority #	Understand New Zealand's Cultural Values, Priority 1
Topic proposal link	https://docs.google.com/document/d/19cnixlbleLiPcLTUuSt-vpwZD5quaw82/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108683113707117084282&rtpof=true&sd=true
Project title:	Understand New Zealand's Cultural Values
Category: (choose 1)	Partnerships / Customers & markets / Innovation / Intelligence / Leadership / Marketing / Operations / Strategy / Student experience
Topic (if applicable):	Agents
Difficulty level: (choose 1)	Beginner / Intermediate / Advanced
Duration: (choose 1)	Minutes: 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 OR 45 Hours: 1, 2 OR 4 Day: 1
Content Request in Original Brief:	<p>This project seeks to help agents understand key differences of New Zealand culture – particularly in terms of what students will likely experience on a daily basis, especially in educational contexts. This will use Hofstede's paradigm of high-low distance and Hall's high context - low context model. Differences between cultural approaches could include comparisons e.g. low-power distance Pakeha saying "standing on your own two feet" compared with the Chinese question "so, you're old enough to spread your wings are you?" It could also address points like New Zealand's drinking culture.</p> <p>Note: This project could be structured across beginner, intermediate and advanced to allow for more advanced understandings.</p>
Project card / In card summary:	Learn about the unique New Zealand culture and why international students should know about it too.
In project summary:	Understanding New Zealand culture To understand New Zealanders, speaking English is not enough. International students also need an understanding of the culture and how it influences Kiwi thinking and behaviour. Knowing about the core cultural values presented in this project will help students be more successful in their interactions with New Zealanders in their daily life and study.

Header list - Add Summary Point:

You will learn:

- about some Kiwi cultural values that influence how New Zealanders think and behave.
- how these cultural values affect education in New Zealand.
- about what international students should do or not do to have the best experience in their Kiwi life and study.

1. It's not just about language - Understanding New Zealand culture

International students are usually keenly aware of the English language challenge that awaits them in New Zealand. Many take preparatory English courses before going overseas. What some are not aware of and consequently do not prepare for are the cultural differences they will encounter in their host country.

Cultural differences can affect how well students understand and adjust to the academic environment, and they can also affect their ability to make friends and have a satisfying social life. Both are important for students' study success and their happiness during their time in New Zealand.

In this project, we look at core cultural values that affect how many New Zealanders behave in their daily lives. Learning about these values will help you support your students as they prepare for their time in New Zealand.

What are important Kiwi values?

New Zealand has developed its own Kiwi culture different from other English-speaking countries, with distinct traditions, attitudes, and beliefs. These have their roots in the country's [bicultural character](#) and the contributions of different groups of immigrants that have arrived over time. Here, we will look at the cultural values of individualism and self-reliance, egalitarianism, humility, open-mindedness, and kindness.

These values are relevant to all areas of New Zealand society and provide a set of lenses through which many New Zealanders interpret the world and evaluate their own and other people's behaviour. Naturally, these values also define education. In other words, they affect how teachers teach, how learners learn, and what teachers and students expect from each other.



New Zealanders are proud of their friendly, multicultural nation at the edge of the map.

2. Individualism – Many Kiwis value independence and self-reliance

Case Study: Kimiko from Japan - ‘I don’t know how to make friends’

Kimiko is in her first semester at a New Zealand university. She notices that students have to participate in many group discussions in class. The professors ask questions that students should discuss, and then they let the students find their own discussion groups. Kimiko feels left out. Her classmates usually do not invite her to join their groups. She often sits alone or ends up with another international student who also seems to be unpopular.



In addition, Kimiko wonders how she can befriend students who are not Japanese. She says: “I don’t know how to make friends with people who are not in the Japanese Student Organisation. My English isn’t very good, and I don’t want to annoy people, so I wait for my classmates to talk to me – but they don’t. I think they don’t like international students.” At home, in the apartment Kimiko shares with two Kiwi students, things are also not always easy. The flatmates take turns cleaning, but in Japan Kimiko never had to clean the kitchen or the bathroom. She doesn’t quite know how to do it well, and she is afraid the Kiwis might think that she is too lazy to do a good job.

Back to you: Is Kimiko really “unpopular”? What could she do to make friends with Kiwis and other nationalities? How could she find a discussion group more easily in class? What can she do about the cleaning? You will find answers to these questions in the text below.

Even though New Zealand is a proud “team of five million”, many experts consider the country to have individualistic values. In individualistic societies, people tend to focus on being unique individuals rather than on being a member of a family, tribe, or group. They emphasise independence and personal responsibility for their decisions and actions. They want to express their individual talents and reach their own goals rather than group goals. European/Pākehā New Zealanders, who are the largest ethnic group, are more likely to express this value.

An individualistic orientation contrasts with collectivistic cultures, where people tend to feel a stronger sense of belonging and duty to a group and strive for collective goals over personal goals. Good social relationships, harmony within the group, and loyalty to the group and family are very important. Countries that tend to be seen as having more collectivist societies include China, Ecuador, Guatemala, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Please note that people from more individualistic cultures aren't selfish and only "out for themselves", just like people from more collectivistic cultures aren't simply thoughtless sheep in a large herd.

What does New Zealand's individualism mean for international students?

As many New Zealanders have a more individualistic view on life, they appreciate independence, creativity, and critical thinking. Depending on their cultural background, some international students – especially those from more collectivistic cultures – might encounter challenges in New Zealand in their everyday life, their social life, and their studies. Let's look at a few areas where students have reported challenges:

1. Students are expected to have life skills like cleaning and cooking.

Children in New Zealand are raised to be self-reliant and to "stand on their own feet". While they live with their parents, they are expected to do chores in the household. When they leave home to study at a tertiary institution, they must take care of themselves, which includes cooking, cleaning, paying bills, getting a part-time job, and doing laundry. Tertiary students often live in shared flats, where all flatmates take turns doing housework. International students like Kimiko are expected to do their fair share. Students who are not used to doing housework should practice before they arrive. If they encounter problems in New Zealand, they can ask someone, for example a flatmate, to show them how to do it (see point 3 below).

2. Friendships might feel different and not as close.

People from individualistic cultures tend to leave more room for independence, even in close friendships. They don't necessarily get involved in all aspects of their friends' lives and may not intervene unless they are asked to. This might feel cold and unfriendly to students who are used to more involved friendships. In class, students should not wait for others to approach them. Instead, we recommend that international students make the first move and ask. Kimiko from the case study above could ask: "Is there still room in your group?" Some international students report feeling too shy to approach others. They should note that many Kiwi students feel equally shy, despite their outward appearance of confidence.

Like Kimiko above, some international students report that locals are not as interested in making friends as they are. This is true everywhere in the world and has nothing to do with the "popularity" of overseas students. Local students haven't left their home country. Unlike international students, they might not feel alone and in need of new friendships. They often still have family and old friends nearby. So it is not uncommon for international students to first find friends amongst other newly arrived internationals in need of a new social network. For advice on how international students can improve their social life, take a look at the project "[Be aware of emergent issues and solutions](#)".

3. “He who does not ask, does not get.” - Students are expected to speak up.

In New Zealand, students are expected to manage their own studies. They are expected to identify issues or gaps by themselves and ask for help. Some international university students report feeling that nobody takes care of them and that they have to do everything by themselves. In fact, lecturers and tutors in New Zealand are usually happy to help, but students need to ask, for example by sending an email, coming to the office hour, or talking to teachers after class. New Zealand universities also offer a wide range of support services, from counselling to workshops on study skills (time management, effective reading, etc.), learning support, and pre-reading services. These are services-in-waiting. That means, students need to take the initiative and make active use of them. Please see the project “[Understand New Zealand student services](#)” for more information on support services available to international students.

4. Students should develop learner autonomy and independent thinking.

A goal of New Zealand education is to help students become independent from their teachers in their learning and thinking. This starts in secondary education, where the focus is on key competencies like self-management, self-motivation, and creative, critical thinking. Some international students are more used to teachers supervising all aspects of the learning process. These students might feel confused by the level of independence and responsibility expected of them, especially in tertiary education. For more insight about key competencies that students acquire in secondary and tertiary education, please read the project “[Understand New Zealand’s education system](#)”.

Initially, my Vietnamese friends and I didn’t tell the tutor when we didn’t understand something, so we missed out on quite a lot of material at the beginning. I didn’t want to bother my tutors. And I didn’t want them to think that I am not smart and that I don’t belong here. I thought they might say: ‘Why is she here at university?’



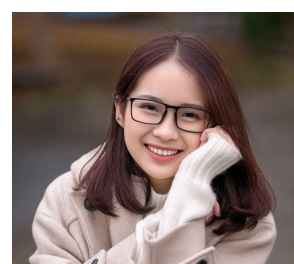
Ha, nursing student from Vietnam

We have pointed out above that individualism does not equal a “me first!” attitude. This is particularly true in New Zealand where people also value equality and fairness.

3. Many Kiwis value equality and fairness

Case Study: “In New Zealand, students call teachers by their first names!”

Lilly from China has recently started her undergraduate studies at a New Zealand university. Several things puzzle her: first of all, students call professors by their first names. Professors often laugh and joke with their students and share personal stories. Last week, one lecturer even said in class: “I don’t know everything. Please tell me, when you notice that I made a mistake.”



Lilly also struggles a bit with the class format and the teaching. Some lecturers don't give lectures at all. Instead, lessons often include group work and class debates. Lecturers ask the students: "What is your opinion? Do you agree or disagree with the author of this article? Why or why not?" The domestic students debate and give their opinions freely. They even tell the professors that they disagree with them! Recently, Lilly asked: "But what is the correct answer?" The professor said: "In this case, there is not just one correct answer. I accept different answers if you present good, convincing evidence." This frustrates Lilly. How will she know how to answer a similar question in the next exam?

Back to you: What aspects of New Zealand culture do you notice in Lilly's report? What is education like in New Zealand? How do students and teachers interact? How might that be different from Lilly's experience in China? What advice would you give her, so she can adjust to the Kiwi culture and teaching style? You will find answers to these questions in the text below.

New Zealanders value equality in society. In other words, they find it important that everybody gets treated the same, whether they are a student or a professor, an employee or a manager. The rich and powerful are not seen as "better"; they are simply seen as "better off", that is, as having an advantage, which, however, doesn't make them deserving of more respect or privileges.

In New Zealand, high-ranking people like professors can and should still be criticised, and they must justify their opinions rather than relying on their authority or status alone. Owning up to mistakes and gaps in knowledge is acceptable because "nobody is perfect". At the same time, all Kiwis expect to be treated with respect, regardless of their position in society. Individuals, including students, are judged by their own character, behaviour, and the quality of their work – not by their own or their family's status or wealth. Everybody deserves a "fair go". Take as an example the 40th prime minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, whose parents worked as a police officer and a school cafeteria assistant (see [Women's Weekly](#)).

What does Kiwi equality mean for international students?

Depending on their cultural background, international students might need time to adjust to the following (please click on items 1 to 3 for further details):

1. Teacher-student relationships are more informal.

Teachers in New Zealand are still authorities, but their relationship with students is often more informal and friendlier than in cultures with a greater emphasis on hierarchy. Lilly from the case study above is not used to talking to authority figures in an informal way, and she might find this even a bit rude, but in New Zealand this is not a sign of disrespect. Please see the project "[Kiwi-isms](#)" for more information about how New Zealanders communicate.

2. A Kiwi teacher is "a guide on the side" rather than "a sage on the stage".

Kiwi teachers don't just want to give students information to memorise. Instead, they want students to become independent thinkers. They put the students at the centre of the class and encourage "learning by doing". This learner-centred teaching style includes group work and discussions. Teachers often behave more like guides that help students to work things out for themselves. This can be somewhat challenging for students like

Lilly who are used to more teacher-centred education with the teacher making all decisions and providing “the right answers” to students. However, many international students later report that the best part of a Kiwi education is that they have become independent researchers and thinkers. Please also see our project “[Understand New Zealand’s education system](#)” to learn more about teaching and learning styles in New Zealand.

3. Teachers focus on students’ opinions and critical thinking.

In New Zealand, students are expected to express their own opinions in class and in their assignments. Especially in tertiary education, students are expected to show critical thinking skills. They shouldn’t just repeat memorised information; instead, they should also assess and evaluate it. They should explain whether the information is, for example, relevant, sufficient, correct, or incorrect. Like our case-study student Lilly above, Linda Yu, a PhD student at Auckland University, noticed the importance of critical thinking when she wrote her first literature review: “[My supervisor] said I did a very good literature review but I wasn’t showing my own opinion about what I had researched – there was no critical thinking being displayed, and I needed to justify why I went with one choice over another.” You can read more about Linda’s experiences here: [Navigating Chinese students’ culture shock](#). For more information about the New Zealand education system, its goals and values, please see “[Understand New Zealand’s education system](#)”.

Now, let’s take a look at what happens when individualism meets egalitarianism.

4. Kiwis value humility and understatement

Case Study: “Nobody seems interested in talking to me!”

Bryan from the USA has just started his PhD studies at a New Zealand university. He wants to make friends with his three Kiwi office mates and repeatedly tries to start conversations. On one occasion, Bryan shares that he lived in Japan for several years. He assumes that this will be an interesting topic to start a conversation. He pulls a Japanese magazine out of his backpack with a photo of himself on the cover. “I was the hacky sack champion in Japan for two years in a row”, he explains. His office mates show little interest. One asks: “Oh, is that a thing?” Another inquires: “Do you always carry that magazine around?” Then they decide to go to lunch.

On another occasion, an office mate shouts out in frustration: “I will never finish my PhD! It’s been over three years now, and I am still writing!” Bryan gets involved. He announces: “I’ll finish my PhD in three years. I hear that some people take four years, but that’s too long for me. You gotta be tough, and you gotta want it.” His statement is met with silence from two of his office mates. One says, “Yeah, sure. Good on ya”, before turning back to her computer screen.

Bryan is frustrated. How can he break the ice and get a conversation started, if nobody seems interested in a conversation?



Back to you: Are Bryan’s office mates really uninterested in getting to know Bryan? What intercultural problem could cause the unenthusiastic response from the Kiwis to Bryan’s

attempts to start a conversation? What would be a good way of starting a conversation? You will find answers to these questions in the text below.

Some ‘individualistic’ cultures like (parts of) the USA accept outspoken self-promotion as an acceptable way to stand out from the crowd and to get ahead in a competitive society. In contrast, many New Zealanders value humility and understatement .

Kiwis often dislike it when someone draws attention to their own achievements or their high status in life. Showing off is taboo. As the culture guide *Culture Smart! New Zealand* points out: “[A Kiwi] certainly does not want to hear from you how successful, rich, or whatever else you might be.” In particular, many New Zealanders dislike bragging about intended successes that have not (yet) been achieved and that are not supported by evidence –as in Bryan’s claim that he will finish his PhD in three years in the case study above. Instead, New Zealanders tend to downplay individual achievements or, if possible, ascribe them to a team effort. This behaviour is well explained in an episode of the animated series *Lifeswap* by Steffen Kreft and Connor Williams: [Group Effort](#) (also available on Vimeo).

This Kiwi value of humility draws on the Māori principle of *whakaiti*, a word used to describe Māori leadership. It means that good leaders remain humble, work behind the scenes, do not promote themselves but enable others to step up.

Tall poppy syndrome

A strong expectation of humility can sometimes lead to what is known as the “tall poppy syndrome”. This term uses the idea of cutting back a poppy that is taller than the rest of the flowers, until it is the same height as the other poppies in the field. This picture illustrates that successful people who are seen as arrogant, boastful, or ungrateful might feel the consequences and be ridiculed and “put in their place”.



Self-deprecating humour

Humility also comes through in Kiwi humour, which is often self-deprecating, which means that the speaker belittles and undervalues their own achievements, skills, or importance.

How do we celebrate \$121 million in the US Box office? Fish fingers for dinner.
(Kiwi/Hollywood director Taika Waititi on the success of *Thor: Ragnarok* in 2017)



Pop Culture Tip: Kiwi Humour



Comedian and “just a typical Kiwi dad” Jordan Watson gives parenting advice on his YouTube channel: [How to Dad](#). In true Kiwi fashion, he attributes the popularity of his videos to baby Alba: “It’s definitely 99 per cent her, 1 percent me” ([The Guardian](#)).

How can international students talk to humble Kiwis?

Here are a few guidelines that international students can follow when talking to humble Kiwis. Please click on points 1 to 3 for further details.

1. Don’t show off.

Don’t brag about your status, achievements, or skills. If you must mention them, do so casually and without drawing too much attention to them. Bryan in the case study can tell that he likes playing hacky sack, but he shouldn’t highlight that he was hacky sack champion. This might come up later, when Bryan and his office mates are friends already.

2. Don’t agree with self-deprecating humour.

Bryan could use self-deprecating humour when talking about his achievements as hacky sack champion. He could say that the other players must have had a bad day. However, when international students hear a Kiwi use self-deprecating humour, they shouldn’t agree with the speaker. For example, when a Kiwi wins an award and announces that they were “just lucky”, it’s better to disagree by saying “I think you deserve it” rather than to agree by saying “Yes, I guess it was luck, not skill”.

3. Don’t criticise New Zealand.

While New Zealanders might belittle their own country during small talk, overseas visitors should avoid criticising New Zealand in casual conversation.

5. Kiwis value open-mindedness and diversity

New Zealand is a multicultural country that can overall be described as very accepting of ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender diversity. It was the first nation to give women the right to vote in 1893, and it was the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to legalise same-sex marriage in 2013. On a global scale, New Zealand ranks third among the countries “most accepting of migrants” ([Gallup, 2019](#)). It is described as having “some of the lowest levels of government restrictions on religion in the world”, and a 2012-survey showed that the vast majority of New Zealanders are open to neighbours of different faiths or nationalities ([Pew Research Centre](#)). Students can find out more about practicing their faith in New Zealand on NauMai NZ: [NauMai NZ – Religious freedom in New Zealand](#).



New Zealanders enjoy wearing costumes at parties and events.

Kiwis have a “live and let live” attitude. You can do whatever you like to do, but you must also accept that other people do “their thing”. This open-mindedness goes hand in hand with other values discussed in this project, like individualism, equality, and humility. Most New Zealanders see other people as equally deserving of respect, regardless of their wealth or status. This includes respect for individual differences, including different everyday choices such as, for example, clothes. If they do object to someone’s fashion or behaviour, they typically keep this to themselves.

6. Kiwis value hospitality and kindness also to strangers

New Zealand is a remote island nation with only around five million inhabitants. The roughly 2,000 km distance to its closest neighbour Australia can only be travelled by plane or ship. Owing to its remoteness, all New Zealanders have had to trust and rely on their neighbours throughout the country’s history. Owing to the country’s small size, many people share family or friendship connections or can at least expect to “cross paths” again in the future. As a consequence, New Zealanders have developed a culture of trust and kindness also towards strangers.

Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, have greatly influenced this focus on kindness. They speak of *manaakitanga*, a principle of showing mutual respect, generosity, hospitality, and *aroha* (love) to others. Kindness builds up the receiver, but it also builds up the giver. Francis and Kaiora Tipene write: “*Manaakitanga* is very much an everyday thing. It is not just a special occasion thing. You don’t just practise it when you have guests. It must be ingrained and extended everywhere you go.”

Valuing kindness means that Kiwis often go out of their way to help others. A lost tourist with a puzzled expression holding a map is often offered assistance without having to ask for it. With a high level of public trust and societal solidarity, New Zealand has been found to be the second safest country in the world ([2021 Global Peace Index](#)).

I was on my way to New Zealand and on my last flight from Auckland to Palmerston North. I told my Kiwi seat neighbour that I would study there to get a Master’s degree but that I didn’t know anyone in the city. She gave me her sister Gillian’s phone number. I was a bit reluctant but then I actually sent Gillian a text message. On the weekend, Gillian picked me up and took me to their farm outside town. I had lunch with the family, and they showed me their cows, the bees, and the vegetable garden. At night, Gillian drove me back home, with my backpack full of cheese, honey, and fresh vegetables. I can’t believe how kind this family is!



Franziska, postgraduate student from Austria

Can kindness create intercultural mis-understanding?

How can kindness ever produce problems? Let’s look at two issues that can arise in intercultural (mis-)communication.

1. Are we best friends?

Kiwis are very open and friendly to everyone, including strangers. They want to create a safe society where everyone is kind and helpful. This unreserved warmth might lead students from more reserved cultures to believe that a close friendship has developed, when this is not necessarily the case. They might feel rejected when the friendship is not as intimate as they assumed.

2. Could this be love?

Sometimes, international students can misread the general openness and kindness of Kiwis as romantic interest. They should be a little cautious in this regard and try to observe the New Zealand culture and context. Meeting up alone for a coffee is not a romantic commitment in New Zealand, and doesn't have to lead to "more". This is also true for international students: They are always free to say "no" to further advances. If students have more questions about love and dating in New Zealand, they can explore NauMai NZ's website: [NauMai NZ – Dating, relationships, and sex in New Zealand](#). You can also find further information in our project "[Be aware of emerging issues and solutions](#)".

"In Germany, when you call someone a 'friend', then you are really friends. In New Zealand, sometimes I think that I have found a friend, but they don't feel the same way, it seems. They are just 'friendly'. That said, I have now made some great real friends in the unicycling club and the chess club."

Arne, high school student from Germany



Now we will bring it all together and look at resources that will help students put these cultural values into action.

7. Cultural values in action: What to do and not to do in New Zealand

Just like every other group, New Zealanders have their own ideas of what is considered good manners and what is considered inappropriate or even offensive. Here you can find a brief guide (in PDF format) to cultural expectations New Zealand: [Worksheet: Cultural Values in Action](#). It is based on the topics discussed above. You can print and share it easily with students who are wondering how they can fit in better. Students can also find further information about Kiwi culture on NauMai NZ – [NauMai NZ – New Zealand culture](#) – and on the Immigration New Zealand website: [INZ – Customs & communication](#). For Māori cultural values and customs, please see our project "[New Zealand – A country with more than one culture](#)". For further information on typical problems and helpful solutions, have a look at our project "[Be aware of emergent issues and solutions](#)".

8. Test your knowledge: A case study

Here is a case study to test your knowledge. It is based on the experiences and questions of real international students in New Zealand. However, names and photos are fictional. In some cases, we have combined stories reported by several students to create one relevant case study.

Before looking at the suggested answer, please think about what advice you would give the student. Then compare your answer with the provided response. Please note that there are many ways of solving the described issues and that the answer provided here is just one of many possible responses.

Case Study: “My professors don’t care about me!”

Soriyah, a business student from Cambodia in her first semester at a New Zealand university, needs your help:

“I am really unhappy with my courses! I feel so alone! My professors don’t help me. I feel like I should already know everything! They keep asking me questions in class – but I am a student! I should be learning, and the teachers should be teaching! And we often discuss things in class with all students contributing their point of view. I have paid a lot of money, so I shouldn’t be talking in class. The teacher should be talking!

I also have to work alone in the library a lot. For an assignment, I have to write an essay. I have to pick my own topic, and it must be different from the topics of all other students. I even have to find my own books and articles. I think the lecturers should tell me about the best readings for the topic. They also expect me to know how to write an essay, how to do references, how to quote correctly, and so on. Nobody has shown me how to do that! I want to ask in class, but there is never enough time.

Often, I don’t do my homework because the readings are so difficult. And sometimes I forget because there was a film or a party at the student centre or I went on a weekend trip with the International Club. When the professors notice that I don’t know the readings and can’t give any answers in class, they just look disappointed and then ask another student. I think professors should be like parents a little bit. They should be strict and punish me, and they should worry about my progress in class. Most of the professors here in New Zealand are just lazy, I think. They don’t care about me! They don’t ask me how I am doing. If I fail my course, I will lose a lot of money and time.”

What advice would you give Soriyah?

Suggested answer:

Soriyah, it’s great that you ask questions in class. You are being very proactive. And it is wonderful to hear that you have an active social life and that you are involved with the International Club.

Let’s take a look at the study methods that teachers use in New Zealand. If you understand how Kiwi teachers teach and what is expected of students, you will likely be happier with your university experience and more successful in your interactions with your teachers.

Firstly, in New Zealand, education is based on collaboration and discussion. The idea is that students learn and remember things better if they discuss ideas, if they have to develop their own point of view, and if they have to listen to other opinions – and then agree or disagree. When teachers ask you to engage in a discussion, they are not “lazy”. They have thought carefully about the questions, and they think that a discussion is the best way for you to develop your knowledge about the topic.

Secondly, a teacher is more a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage. Teachers are like football coaches on the side of the field. They give you assistance and tips on strategy, but you yourself are the football player and have to play the game. The goal of New Zealand education is to help students become independent learners who can manage their own work and who can find and evaluate information alone. That’s why they want you to pick your own topic and find your own materials. It’s a way for you to become an independent researcher and be prepared for your professional future after graduation.

As an independent learner, you are expected to be self-motivated. At university in New Zealand, lecturers no longer see the need to act like a parent who might punish you if you don’t do your homework. They think that you are an independent adult who wants to be at university and who will do all that is required to be successful in their studies.

However, this doesn’t mean that you should do everything alone. Part of becoming an independent learner is to know when to ask. It is not impolite or embarrassing to ask for help in New Zealand. In fact, it is expected. Asking right after class can be tricky though. Often, lecturers have another class right after yours. One idea is to send an email to your lecturer or tutor. You can ask your questions in the email or you can request a meeting in their office. Remember: you can always ask for help and advice.

Thirdly, there are academic skills – like essay writing or doing research – that many international students haven’t developed yet. The best thing is to take a course on academic thinking and writing. Right now, however, we need a quick fix for you. You could take a workshop on essay writing and research skills. You could also use the self-study materials provided by your university. You can go to learning support services. They can assist you and also point out more resources. Let’s look at your university’s website and check out these different options.

9. Summary

In this project, we have discussed some of the central cultural values that many New Zealanders hold. These values influence how Kiwis behave in everyday life, at school, and at work. It is important for international students to understand some of these cultural beliefs and how they might differ from their own.

We looked at the Kiwi values of individualism, egalitarianism, open-mindedness, humility/*whakaiti*, and kindness/*manaakitanga*. We discussed that New Zealanders value self-reliance and that they expect everyone to look after and speak up for themselves. Kiwis like to treat everyone as equals, regardless of how rich or poor or powerful a person is. They value humility and don’t appreciate it if someone is showing off their power, wealth, or achievements too much. We highlighted that New Zealanders are open-minded towards people who are different from themselves, and they expect others to be equally tolerant. They show hospitality and kindness even to complete strangers.

We introduced some helpful resources and tips for you and your students on what Kiwis think and believe, and we provided some advice on what students should and shouldn't do to "find their feet" in New Zealand. Finally, we provided a longer case study for you to test your knowledge on how you could help your students when they struggle with the Kiwi culture in education and everyday life.

Heoi anō tāku mō nāianeī - that's all for now!

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Notes to web designers:

Please note that most or all decorative pictures are taken from pixabay and are copyright free. However, they are just suggestions, providing an idea of the situation, atmosphere, and emotions to be depicted in the ideal photo. It is up to the designer to find an alternative that fits the design requirements. If a photo is under a different copyright license, it is indicated in a comment. This means that I haven't found a photo without copyright or under creative commons but I find that a similar photo should be included to make a point or depict something important (e.g. the tsunami markings on New Zealand roads).

Regarding comments: Some pop-up comments functioning as definitions or further information contain an indication of the source. This is presently indicated as the source name followed by a long URL. The idea is that the source name will be the anchor text for the URL. The link is only included in full because comments in Google Docs don't allow linked anchor text.

Please note that a project might contain graphics that should be used and that should not be replaced by alternatives. To be safe, please check copyright.

