

Teaching the Topic

The first step towards getting a job is to get an interview. How we present ourselves is crucial, in dress and body language as well as language. We need to be prepared to answer questions, to demonstrate our suitability for the job, to come across as a prospective employee. Often interviewers make decisions in the first minute – how can learners take advantage of this?

Resources

Printed information about the organisation; their website; a position outline.

Activities

- Discuss the organisation, the position, what is required, what fits the learner for the job, what the learner has to offer.
- Discuss clothes and presentation. Discuss body language – shaking hands, eye contact, how close to sit, posture, when smiling and not smiling is appropriate, demonstrating interest, how to address the interviewer, recognising signals that the interview is coming to an end.
- Discuss possible questions that will be asked – *What do you think are your strengths/weaknesses?*
- Prepare the learner to ask questions in response to – *Is there anything you would like to ask?*
- Role play the interview. The tutor needs to be well prepared to ask relevant questions! Record the interview and replay, stopping to comment on language and communication strategies. It may be useful to have an observer to notice body language.

Language

- Related to the position – the focus of the organisation, required tasks, skills, experience.
- Appropriate greetings, initial small talk, saying goodbye at the end of the interview.
- Responding to questions, asking relevant questions.

Using the Worksheet

A possible introductory activity: Has the learner had a job interview in their country? How many people interviewed them? How did the interviewers address them? Where did the interview take place? What kind of questions were asked? How did the interview begin? Did they have the opportunity to ask questions? What are appropriate questions to ask in their country?

The worksheet is a number of questions that are often asked at interviews in New Zealand. The learner practises responses to the questions. Record the interview. Listen for clarity of language, appropriate responses, a positive tone. Practise a few questions the learner might ask. A videotape could be used to observe body language. The tutor could throw in an unexpected question which is not on the worksheet – it is impossible to predict what will be asked! The tutor could ask someone who has just had a job interview for these unexpected questions.

Main learning points

Confidence in interview situations; body language and eye contact; clear, confident replies; concrete examples to show qualities, for example, team player, working under pressure, flexibility. Ask appropriate questions. Think on your feet in the situation. End an interview appropriately.

What else could be learnt?

Cultural information – New Zealanders appear relatively informal in interview situations. People use first names, and may ask about background, sports, family. Interviews may take place in informal situations, like a café.

Build in questions specific to the job the learner expects or hopes to get. These may be about skills, problems the learner has come across in a particular job, technical questions relevant to a particular trade or profession, specific pressures in a particular work situation.



Interview role play

These questions are commonly asked in interviews in New Zealand. Role play the interview, with your tutor in the role of interviewer. For Yes/No questions, give examples, don't just say 'Yes.'



1. Tell us about yourself.
2. What experience do you have? (Make sure it is connected to the position.)
3. Do you work well in a group? Are you a team player?
4. Do you consider yourself a flexible person?
5. What is your greatest strength? What do you think you would bring to this organisation?
6. Can you work under pressure? (Yes! Give examples)
7. Are you self-motivated? Would you describe yourself as a self-starter?
8. Can you give an example of when you had to solve a problem?
9. Tell us about your computing skills.
10. Tell us what you think your weak points are.
11. What do you know about our company/organisation? Why do you want to work for this company/organisation?
12. What are your goals? Where do you see yourself in five years' time?