The ‘Culture Card Game’ Experience

**Aim:**

To introduce people to the alienation you experience when entering a new culture – when you don’t know the rules and can’t ask for help!

**Notes:**

Rotating tables can be the most confusing part of the workshop. Labelling tables or arranging them in a row could help.

You may wish to change the different rulesets, or create new ones.

**Equipment:**

• Pack of cards, divided into two. Each table plays with half a pack, either red or black, to speed up the game and make it simpler)

• Prize for the ‘winners’ table’ (optional). It’s a good idea if you are doing prizes to bring enough for everyone, to balance out the initial ‘unfairness’ of the game at the end!

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| Time | Activity | Details |
| 5 mins | Introduction | Introduction (very brief): play a simple card game and then reflect on how we felt learning the new rules and playing for the first time. |
| 5 mins | Game set upSLIDE 2 | 5 minutes to look over the rules and ask any questions - if you have helpers, have them stationed at each group in order to clarify rules (they will have been briefed beforehand, how much you tell them about the game is up to you).Tables are ranked – there is a winners’ table and a losers’ table. The game works with up to 6 tables, with 4-5 students per table. |
| 20-25 mins | Playing the gameSLIDE 3 | Helpers can maintain the silence (players are allowed to count out loud!)Every 5mins, the winners and losers rotate to different tables (winner goes ‘up’ a table and loser goes ‘down’ a table – everyone at the winners’ table will get a prize/applause at the end).You should rotate every time all tables have defined either a winner or loser (the other can be deduced by counting cards in hand at cut off point) but preferably both. |
| 15 – 25 mins | Debrief & ReflectionSLIDE 4 | Some guiding questions:• Did anyone know what was going on in the game?• As you might have guessed, every table has different rules. • How did we feel about playing the game?• What was it like not being able to communicate with other players?• How did it feel moving to a new table?• How did it feel when a new person moved to the table, and the tables got more and more mixed up?• How did you communicate the confusion given that you had to remain silent?• What kind of coping strategies did we use?• Was it fair that the people in the winning table got the prize?• The idea of the game was to reflect on how it feels to be in a new, different culture and be unable to ask how things are done. • Additional prizes could be given to all at this point. |
| 10 mins | Students share their experiencesSLIDE 5SLIDE 6 | • How might we encounter situations like this in an international university, thinking about classes, halls etc.?• Does this remind you of real situations you have been in? (Students can either discuss as a whole group or discuss in table groups and report back).• Sharing one of your own experiences might help to clarify what is meant by ‘everyday interactions’ and guide students.• Could we apply the coping strategies we used in the game for these real life situations?• Concluding statement and questions. |