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Designed Shock: A Card Game to Improve Cultural Awareness and Empathy

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Designed Shock

75 cards to help designers gain cultural awareness and humility

Before  During  After
Are you about to design in a new setting, for users other than yourself?

Pick a card and do the prompt.

Remember, culture shock can happen across the globe, across the street, and across the room.
Example Card

Bring a snack from home.

Ask someone to recommend a local snack and share yours with them.  
How does each snack taste to both of you?

Find the prompt on the front side of the card
Example Card

During

Find the phase of the experience here, the color of the card also indicates the phase.

Designed Shock

To learn about why we designed this prompt by looking up the culture shock phase and the cultural dimension it is related to, on the associated concept card.
Concepts – Culture Shock
Each card builds on one of the following stages of culture shock

- **Contact**
  - Surface level differences, minimal frustrations

- **Disintegration**
  - Notice deep differences, difficulty predicting social interactions

- **Reintegration**
  - Judgment and rejection of other culture

- **Autonomy**
  - Flexible thinking and acceptance

- **Independence**
  - Trust, balance, and no stereotyping
Concepts – Cultural Dimensions
Each card explores one of the following dimension of culture

Social Relationships
Explores opposing concepts of equality and authority, individualism and collectivism, nurture and challenge.

Epistemological Beliefs
Stability seeking and uncertainty acceptance, logic and reason, causality, and complexity.

Temporal Perceptions
Explore different perceptions of clock time and event time, people’s paths and goals, cycles.
Feedback
- Not used individually if no incentive to
- Differentiate action cards with reflection cards
- Don’t differentiate Before/During/After so categorically
- Make it into an app

To do
- Focus groups with student orgs
- Consulting with community engagement leaders
- Consulting with (graphic) designers
- Iterative re-design
- Test in a real setting
Focus group - 50min - 4-9 students - 5 sessions

- Personal experience - 15min
  - How do you prepare for your design/volunteer experience? What resources do you wish you had? What could have enhanced your experience? - group discussion
  - Describe an “aha” moment you have had when travelling/when designing - individual

- Present the cards, their objective - 10min
  - Initial feedback - how and why would you use them? - group discussion

- Break into two groups
  - How would you change the design? - 10min
  - Evaluate a prompt - individual - 5min
  - Write your own prompts and name the cards - 10min
REFERENCES

Design Ethnography
I. Mohedas; “Characterizing the application of design ethnography techniques to improve novice human-centered design processes;” Deep Blue University of Michigan, 2016

Cultural Shock Model

Cultural Dimensions

Cultural Awareness and Humility
www.culturosity.com/articles/whatisculturalawareness.htm