



EuroDIVERSOPHY Game Demonstration

Presented at the ISAGA Conference,
Tartu, Estonia, July 6, 2000

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Abstract

DIVERSOPHY[®] (wisdom about differences) is the name we give to the ability to work effectively across cultures. It includes a rich variety of diversAbilities, including both the culture general and culture-specific skills that are increasingly needed for working in global environments, cultural knowing, culturally appropriate behavioral choices, the ability to share experiences and values, and drawing wisdom from the culture itself and peoples

experience with it. DIVERSOPHY[®] is also the name of the award-winning intercultural game specifically designed to help us develop these five diversAbilities. In this presentation, we review the principles of gaming and concepts of culture upon which DIVERSOPHY[®] is based. Then we examine the elements and procedures of the game and how it is debriefed.

Presentation

History of DIVERSOPHY[®]

Early Development

The original version of DIVERSOPHY[®] is a diversity and intercultural board game for up to 6 persons or 12 persons playing in teams. Players are tested on facts and appropriate behavioral choices, share their own background and experiences with diversity, and undergo the risks of working in a multicultural environment. DIVERSOPHY[®] began as a co-production of MULTUS INC. and George Simons International. The first version of the materials was developed by combining a prototype DIVERSOPHY[®] game developed by MULTUS in 1991-92 with The Oberlin Game, a student staff training simulation developed and copyrighted by George Simons in 1974. (1974 The Oberlin Game—The Proceedings of the 13th Annual Symposium of the National Gaming Council, Pittsburgh). In late 1992, a team of members of both organisations combined the designs, researched and created up-to-date materials for the game, field-tested the results, and authored a Facilitator's Guide Book. The first professional version was published 1993

Current Development

In November of 1998 George Simons International purchased back the rights to the game and set to developing a MultiPlay (non-board based) version of the game that was more

portable, accommodated more players at one time and could be played in a variety of ways:

- Using cards only: Three to eight players go around the group in turns picking cards from a randomised deck. They respond to and follow the instructions on the cards, trying to choose the best answers and most appropriate behaviors for the cultural environment they are discussing. They keep the cards they win and discard those they lose. Individuals and teams with the most cards at the end of the game are the champions, but everyone who learns is a winner.
- With the six-coloured die: Played as with cards only, except that players toss a rolling cube and take a card of the colour the cube turns up. The cube may also show a black question mark or "opportunity" side, in which case the player gets to ask a cultural question of one of his or her teammates before rolling again.
- With the board game: Three to eight players roll dice and move around the traditional laminated board. They try to avoid four traps, Ethnocentricity, Stereotypes, Bias, and Assimilation, while facing up to five challenges provided by the cards in the MultiPlay deck.
- Under the customised directions of a trainer or facilitator. Suggestions for various uses come with each deck and more information can be found in the Users' Fo-

rum on this website at www.diversophy.com

Elements of the game

Each DIVERSOPHY® game, including EuroDIVERSOPHY® includes up to 200 diversiCARDS in five colors, three rolling cubes or dice, 3 QuickStart cards on how to play the game using cards alone or with the rolling cube, as well as 3 QuickStart cards on how to use the card set with the DIVERSOPHY® board game. It can be played for at least one hour by three different groups of people simultaneously without running out of cards. Longer, if the used cards are exchanged from group to group. Maximum playing time, however, should not exceed one and a half hours.

Cultural theory underlying the game and game cards

Defining culture

The developers of DIVERSOPHY® define culture as “a discourse for survival & success, developed by a group of people, in a specific environment, stored as a set of unconscious conversations or mental programs that are sometimes heard in the conscious mind.” (Simons, George F. with Carmen Vazquez and Philip R. Harris, 1993, Transcultural Leadership: Empowering the Diverse Workforce, Gulf Publishing Co., Houston, TX). This definition is much more richly expressed in the words of a children’s book as, “The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And, learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other’s memory. This is how people care for themselves.” (Lopez, Barry Holstun, et al., 1990, Crow and Weasel, CA, North Point Press).

Cultural competencies

Cultural competencies or “diversABILITIES” as we define them are the components of DIVERSOPHY®, i.e., the many ways that people have learned to be aware of, understand, cope with, manage, and value the differences which they experience in each other. The DIVERSOPHY® game card types each aim at developing some of these competencies as follows:

Yellow cards inculcate behavioral sensitivity. This diversiABILITY enables one to choose appropriate cultural behaviors and avoid those words and behaviors which offend or unfairly hinder other individuals or groups. Such sensitivity leads to sound “diversiCHOICES” in how we behave toward others. Here is a diversiCHOICE card:

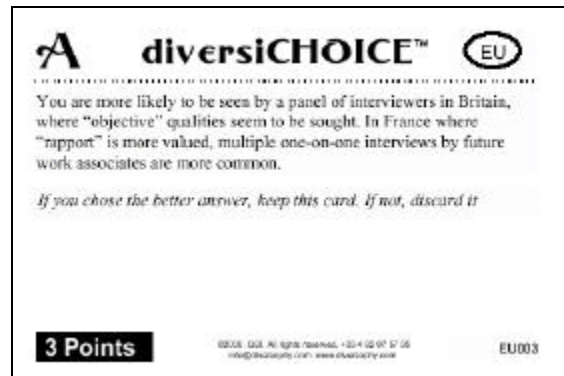
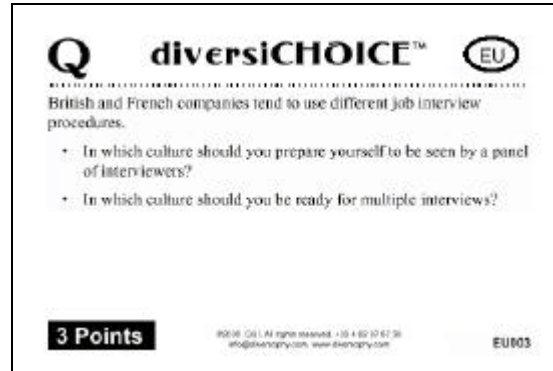


Figure 1: diversiCHOICE card, front and back

Green cards inculcate culture specific information, which make one alert to and responsive to the differences encountered in other individuals & groups and to their perspectives & experiences. Cultural awareness leads to “diversiSMARTS”, a growing range of knowledge about one’s own culture and about people different from oneself. A sample card:



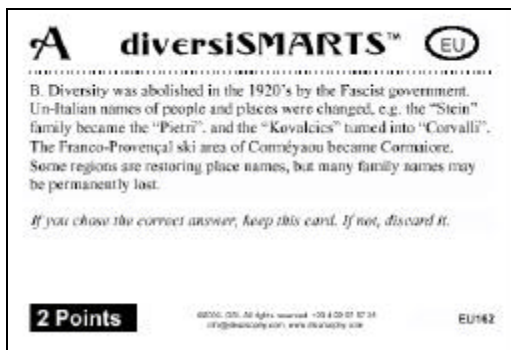


Figure 2: diversiSMARTS card, front and back

Red cards impact the player with a sense of responsibility in a diverse environment or a culture not his or her own. If all the prejudices, injustices and inequities of the workplace were to disappear at daybreak, we would still face the task of learning to deal responsibly with the diversiRISKS that come our way as a result of living and working within each other's cultural boundaries. This results in Equity, treating people fairly. Here are both a positive and negative example:

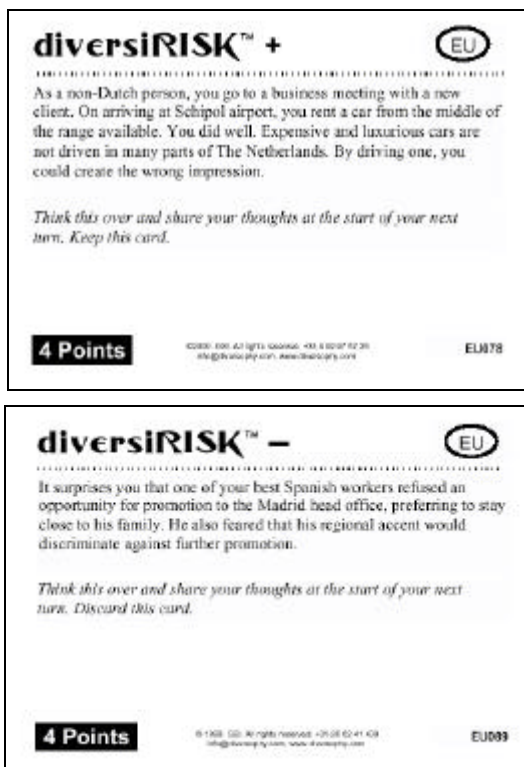


Figure 3: diversiRISK cards, positive and negative samples

White cards are called "diversiGUIDES". They look to the culture itself for the wisdom it

brings. Opening ourselves to the many ways and truths that different cultures have brought into being and using these to better our own and our neighbors' lives and work results in the Value Added of diversity. E.g., what would one learn from the Swedes via the proverb on this diversiGUIDE card?

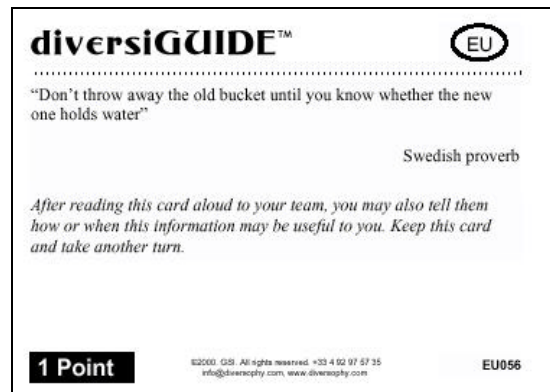


Figure 4: diversiGUIDE card

Blue cards encourage tolerance, which empowers individuals and groups not to take offense nor give offense when responding to others' insensitivity. Thus, it enables us to "diversiSHARE", to talk about ourselves and our experiences in order to appreciate and learn from each other.

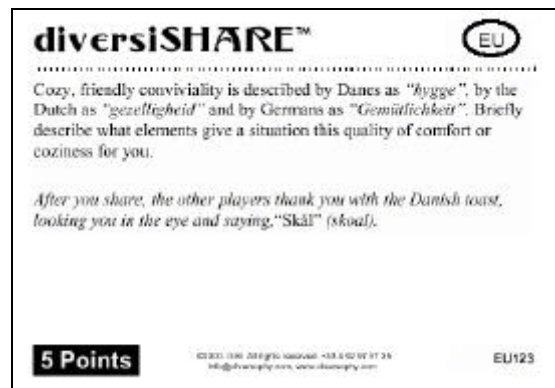


Figure 5: diversiGUIDE card

How to play MultiPlay EuroDIVERSOPHY®

Rules of play

This demonstration utilised the rules for playing with cards only. A QuickStart card was provided to each of the groups of 5-6 participants, with these instructions:

1. Read these instructions aloud to your team.

2. The object is to win as many points as you can for yourself and your team before the game ends. You win points by successfully responding to diversiCARDS. Each card's point value is at the bottom left. Keep cards you win. Discard the rest in a pile in the center of the group.
3. The person to my left starts. Play goes clockwise. When it is your turn, take the top card. Read the front aloud, then respond to it. If you draw a green or yellow card, give your answer. Then, turn the card over and read both the answer and instruction aloud. Follow the instruction.
4. If you choose not to respond to a card, another player may volunteer to do so. If no one volunteers, discard the card and lose that turn. After the volunteer responds and carries out the instruction, the next turn belongs to the person on your left.
5. When the facilitator ends the game, add up your points. The person with the most points is team champion. The team with the most points wins the game.

During play, participants are encouraged to write on and attach sticky notes to cards that they found interesting or perhaps disagreed with for comment or discussion during the debriefing period.

Debriefing

At the close of the time available for play, time is reserved for a debriefing in which the noted cards are discussed with the facilitator and participants are asked to discuss and comment on a variety of questions aimed at helping them put into practice what they have learned in the course of the game. Questions are customised for the groups learning goals. A generic set is provided as follows:

1. What insights and learnings did you have while playing the game?
2. Which of these could you immediately apply to your job or your relationships with others?
3. How did the playing of the game bring out the cultural values of the players, e.g., Did you compete or collaborate? What kind of culture did your team become?
4. What are some consequences you see as a result of playing this game? What next steps you will take?

5. What would you like to know more about? Are there cards you would like to discuss further?

Applications

DIVERSOPHY® has been widely used in corporate and organisational settings in both the public and private sectors throughout the world. Editions exist in four languages and special editions have been custom made to meet specific organisational objectives. Common applications include, general intercultural and diversity training, expatriate preparation and continuing education, business schools and foreign service agencies, touring and service industries, and training for multicultural management, teambuilding and customer service. Online applications are in development.

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