Quartets: Learning by Playing Cards!



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Quartets: Learning by Playing Cards!

Objective

This game was designed in order to let pupils learn more about the important themes in the Mexican culture as well as in the communities (see appendix A for an explanation of the themes). For each theme, Dutch as well as Mexican examples are provided, so that the differences and similarities between the two cultures can be observed. Some of them might not be as prevalent in the Netherlands, why? This can be discussed with the pupils. The children, in a playful manner, will learn more about other cultures in comparison to their own and their horizons will be broadened.

Target audience

This game can be played by older primary school children (ages 10-12) as well as by high school children (ages 13-18). For the latter group more discussions can be included, and the critical thinking of the pupils can be stimulated. The game was created in English, to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Materials

- Set of cards with different themes (see appendix B for the original design; see appendix C for the template)
- (Color) printer
- Paper
- Cutting machine
- Scissors
- Laminator

Time

The game will last at least 20 minutes. It is up to the teacher to decide if he/she would like to extend it, by including a more elaborate or less elaborate discussion afterwards. It is recommended to set out some time to do the discussion as it will contribute to the children's understanding and will bring them new perspectives. Some selected themes or subcategories can be looked at in further detail.

Design

In designing the cards, colorful pictures were chosen to spark the children's interest. For every card, a brief description is provided on what is shown on the picture. While waiting for their turn, it is the idea that the children will read these explanations. The class discussions at the end of the game can further stimulate the children's thinking.

Note: this game was entirely designed on the basis of the creators' experiences in Mexico. Pictures of their own collection have been used. Teachers are encouraged to design their own quartets, based on their own experiences. A "quartets template" has been included in appendix C.

Instructions

<u>Preparation</u>: Print the cards in color (if desirable, adapt the themes/pictures/explanations to make it more authentic to the teacher's own

preference). Do not forget to print a background for the cards! Use a laminator to protect the paper cards. Doing this will increase the durability of the quartets. Also, it looks rather more fancy!

In class: Divide the class in groups, provide each of the groups with a complete set of cards. Normally, quartets is played with at least three players and a maximum of six players, with the aim to win all the sets of four. Firstly, the cards are shuffled and dealt evenly between the players. Then, the player to the dealer's left may start the game by asking another player for a specific card (naming both the category and the title of the card they would like to have) in order to help him/her create a quart. When the player has the card asked for, he/she has to hand it over. If not, it becomes his/her turn to ask. If the player A quart is complete when the player has all four cards of one specific category, which are all clearly marked by color and title. When this happens, the player should place the quart, faced open, in front of him/her. The game is over when all quarts are formed. The winner is the one who has the most quarts.

After the game, it is useful to discuss the topics the students encountered in their set of cards. Make this a classroom discussion. Possible discussion questions and follow-up sources can be found in Appendix A.

Suggestions

This game could be used as a starting point for a more in-depth exploration of specific themes and subcategories. It is recommended to let the children choose the topics of their interest. A few ideas are that teachers can ask their pupils to do research, to give a presentation, to make a poster, or to make a video. It is suggested that these kind of activities are done in groups. The pupils would be stimulated to use and develop various skills, such as research skills, analytical skills, and creative skills. The pupils learn how to work together and how to share knowledge with one and other, as well as with the teacher. In addition, they gain different perspectives and acquire new insights into their topic.

Red category Activism

Activism can be found in different forms, within different spheres of life. It can occur on a global, national or local level. One can demonstrate in various ways, for example with and without violence. Activism usually occurs when a dominant entity, like a government or a multinational cooperation, enforces certain things which are harmful to a group of people who are regarded as inferior by the dominant party. Power relations play an important role in this respect. The group which is regarded as inferior use activism to make their voices heard, and to try to change the situation. Especially within the indigenous communities in Mexico, there is a lot of resistance and a strong feeling towards protecting one's own community. The indigenous Mexican youth is raised with this notion and often take initiative and dedicate themselves to get their viewpoint heard. The Mexican government repeatedly disregards and violates the rights of the indigenous peoples in favour of their own interests, but by means of activism these people offer opposition. They do not passively accept their faith, but try to actively counter it. While the source of activism in Mexico can be a matter of life or death, activists in the Netherlands usually demonstrate against less grave situations.

Possible discussion questions

- Which forms of activism can you come up with?
- Why do you think it is important that people's opinions are heard by the people/the government?

Additional sources

- http://radiozapatista.org/?p=8700
- http://www.slavernijenjij.nl/de-erfenis-nu/zwarte-piet/
- http://rabble.ca/news/2013/12/blackface-and-christmas-black-activism-challenges-racist-tradition-netherlands
- http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/
- http://colectivozoociedad.blogspot.nl/

Blue category Autonomy

Autonomy is a form of independence and self-sufficiency, which can be found in bigger and smaller forms. The notion of autonomy as perceived in Mexico, differs from the individualistic view often employed in Western society. In Mexico, the focus is on being self-sufficient, independent from possible restrictions imposed by the government. The most important aspect of this autonomy is that it is enjoyed together, as a community. In the Western world, autonomy is commonly seen as being independent *from* others instead of *with* others.

The example of the Zapatistas as a completely independent, self-governed community might be interesting to look at in further detail. The Zapatistas are a community in Chiapas (Mexico) who live entirely independent from the government. They are completely self-sufficient. For instance, they produce their own electricity, grow their own foods, and take care of their own "shit" by not being connected to the sewage system.

The smaller initiatives such as having a communal garden or keeping chicken could be useful to discuss as well. It will increase the children's awareness of their dependency. Children often do not realize for example that they are dependent on supermarkets to provide them with food.

Possible discussion questions

- Why do people want to be autonomous? What are (dis)advantages?
- Do we also have independent communities similar to the Zapatistas in the Netherlands?

Additional sources

- http://mexicosolidarity.org/programs/alternativeeconomy/zapatismo/en
- http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/indigenous-rights-and-self-determination-mexico
- http://www.zoalsjijwilt.nl/hoe-werkelijk-iedereen-zelfvoorzienend-kan-leven/
- http://greywateraction.org/content/about-composting-toilets

Light-green category Knowledge

In Western societies like the Netherlands, knowledge is often regarded as something which needs to be *taught*. The assumption is that one cannot learn knowledge by himself or herself, but has to be educated. In schools, the focus is predominantly on written texts, which are regarded as the most valuable source of information. Pupils are therefore required to read various books and articles about a specific topic, after which they can be considered *knowledgeable* about this particular topic. In the classroom setting, the teacher is generally seen as the only person who possesses knowledge. The pupils are often supposed to learn from him/her, instead of learning from, for example, fellow pupils. There is a hierarchy in knowledge. The teacher is on top of this "knowledge pyramid", his/her knowledge being valued most highly. In other cultures, like the Mexican culture, the importance of *oral* knowledge is emphasized, and significant life lessons are passed on from generation to generation by the use of stories. There are often no hierarchies in knowledge: everyone possesses valuable knowledge and everyone can thus learn from and with each other. Pupils tend to be rarely aware of the existence of different types of knowledges.

Possible discussion questions

- Which important (life) lesson, that you take with you in your daily life have you learned from your (grand)parents?
- How is knowledge viewed differently in different communities? And where is knowledge found/gained?

Additional sources

- http://www.learner.org/courses/learningclassroom/support/07 learn context.pdf
- Giving the classroom back to kids: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E61YKwA6B28

Yellow category Fiestas

Fiestas constitute one of the pillars of the Mexican community and thus form an important and integral part of their culture. There are many celebrations throughout the year. One could say that instead of living in cycles of time, the Mexican people live in cycles of fiestas. Every fiesta has their own meaning and symbols, and often has religious underpinnings. The Guelaguetza is more of a local festivity, originated and located in the city of Oaxaca. During the two-day Guelaguetza, the indigenous population sets out to show their culture by means of clothing, cooking, artwork, and performing (singing and dancing). The Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), on the other hand, is celebrated throughout Mexico.

In the Netherlands there are also some traditional celebrations. Sinterklaas and Koningdag provide good examples of Dutch annual festivities which are very typical for the Netherlands. These celebrations also have their own meanings and symbols. Whereas many Dutch holidays find their roots in religion as well, Koningdag is an exception. Patriotism is key during this day.

Possible discussion questions

- How are the Mexican fiestas different from those in the Netherlands?
- Are fiestas equally important in the Dutch culture as in the Mexican?

Additional sources

- Guelaguetza 2012: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LivITceYCOY
- http://www.2camels.com/festivals/mexico.php
- http://www.aroundtheglobe.nl/reizen/voorbereidingen/wat-typisch-nederlands-si12522.html

Purple category Human rights

In the Netherlands, it is generally believed that no basic human rights are severely violated. However, it is important to realize that some people in the Netherlands do face discrimination and/or violence on a daily basis. Think about homosexuals. They are by some people regarded as "less" than human because of their sexual preference, and therefore treated with disrespect. This might not always be noticeable to an outsider, who might proclaim that there is few discrimination against homosexuals. However, it can happen in mundane, daily situations like doing groceries or going to school that homosexuals are offended. The outsider, by looking at the bigger picture, might not realize that violations of the homosexuals' human rights commonly occur on such small levels.

Indigenous communities in Mexico also face violations of their human rights. When financial opportunities and big international companies come into play, their history

and ways of life are completely disregarded and their lands taken away. This is the case for the Isthmus wind farm – a project initiated by multiple Western multinationals, among which a Dutch pensioner company. The Western elderly investing in this project (as members of the Dutch pensioner company) think that they are contributing to a good cause, as the wind farm is promoted as an environmentally friendly way of generating energy. The resistance of the Zapotec communities is "taken care of" by the Mexican authorities. As a result, the Western elderly do not know that their money is contributing to the violation of the human rights of the Zapotec community, nor does the rest of the world even know about the existence and struggle of this community.

Possible discussion questions

- Why do you think it is important that people are critical before they support a seemingly good initiative?
- Have you ever encountered violations of human rights? Which?

Additional sources

- Documentary Somos Viento about the resistance against the Isthmus wind park: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaV56DYy1NU
- http://tierrayterritorio.wordpress.com/category/comunicados/english/
- http://www.hermanosenelcamino.org/english.html
- http://www.amnesty.nl/mensenrechten/encyclopedie/migranten-rechten
- http://www.amnesty.nl/mensenrechten/themas/lqbt

Orange category Community

Being part of a community and contributing to this community are of high importance in Mexican society. The community forms the centre of daily life, and activities are focused around it. The value of being together, doing things together and helping one other are key factors. In Mexico, there exists *comunalidad*, a word which is used to express the deep meanings of, and associations with communal life. *Comunulidad* focuses around four pillars: communal authority via the assembly and the cargo system, communal territory, communal enjoyment via traditional fiestas, and communal work via volunteer duties. People tend to speak of "we", instead of "I". In some indigenous languages, it is linguistically impossible to speak in singular form.

In the Western world, communities are less centre-staged. The notion of individualism is often stressed: you should be able to take care of yourself and make sure that you are doing well before thinking about helping others. However, it is important to realize that in our everyday lives, we are a part of various communities, in which we have to rely on others and co-operate to reach a common goal. Being part of a community can have positively enhance one's life.

Possible discussion questions

- Which communities are you a part of?
- Why do you think the feeling of community is important?

Additional sources

- http://berkana.org/2011/10/hablamos-de-la-comunalidad/#more-1755
- http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/to-build-community-an-economy-of-gifts
- http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/benefits/publications/carelink/tipsheets/community.pdf

Light-blue category Food

Food constitutes an important part of every culture and therefore it is interesting to have a look at typical Mexican and Dutch dishes.

In Mexico, food forms a more integral part of life than in the Netherlands. The Mexican women start their days by going to the local market, where they buy fresh products. They then spend hours in the kitchen preparing meals. The most extensive meal is lunch. Tortillas are nearly always present on the table, home-made by the women themselves. Preparing and eating food is very much a social happening in Mexico. Everyone gathers around the table and shares stories with each other. In the Netherlands, the preparation of food is perhaps more straightforward: simple products are bought and put together (as the examples of boerenkoolstamp and hutspot illustrate). In general, the Dutch are more accustomed to eat pre-packaged food, like soup in cans. The most extensive meal is dinner. Preparing and eating food is less of a social activity than in Mexico. There is usually one person doing the cooking, and eating is sometimes done in front of the television or with only part of the family present.

Possible discussion questions

- Which differences can you identify between the Mexican and Dutch dishes?
- Do you consider eating food to be a social activity?

Additional sources

- http://ixtapacantina.com/mexican-eating-habits-you-didnt-know-about/
- http://www.buzzle.com/articles/mexican-food-culture.html
- http://www.holland-at-home.com/nl/de-nederlandse-eetcultuur

Grey category Education

Education can be regarded as the most powerful tool for conveying knowledge, but also of spreading knowledge of what knowledge is. Children can be educated in various ways, by using distinct strategies. Each of the approaches presented in this quart reflect different views on knowledge. Their focus corresponds to what they find important in terms of gaining this knowledge.

In the Netherlands, there is a general preference for reproducing knowledge by first reading about a topic and consequently summarizing the findings, rather than producing knowledge by oneself, in the form of art for instance. Theory is most important. In Dutch schools, children are educated in a classroom setting where the teacher generally speaks and decides on the curriculum, and where the pupils mostly

listen.

In Mexico, learning by doing is more common. At the Universidad de la Tierra (Unitierra) in Oaxaca for example, gaining practical experience in the forms of apprenticeships is considered essential. Books and other materials merely serve this purpose. At Unitierra, learning is done collectively, not individually, and people engage in intercultural dialogues.

Possible discussion questions

- What do you think are the benefits of each of the described teaching approaches?
- Why and what do you think people would like to learn from the indigenous?

Additional sources

- http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/liberate-your-space/reclaiming-our-freedom-to-learn
- http://unitierra.blogspot.mx/
- http://voxxi.com/2013/04/02/democratic-schools-perspective-effective/
- http://roarmag.org/2013/08/escuelita-zapatista-10-year-autonomy/
- http://www.montessori.org/imc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23 <a href="mailto::montessori-and-traditional-education-philosophical-perspectives-and-approaches-in-contrast&catid=16:articles-introducing-montessori-education<emid=44">http://www.montessori.org/imc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23 <a href="mailto::montessori-and-traditional-education-philosophical-perspectives-and-approaches-in-contrast&catid=16:articles-introducing-montessori-education<emid=44">http://www.montessori-and-traditional-education-philosophical-perspectives-and-approaches-in-contrast&catid=16:articles-introducing-montessori-education<emid=44

Green category Stereotypes

Generally, people have predisposed images in their mind before they meet others. Especially regarding (sub)cultures that are different from one's own, people often have associations connected to them. These are informed by what they have heard from others or have seen portrayed in the media. Stereotypes might be negative. The gypsies, for instance, are often linked to drugs, crime, and violence. As obvious as it might sound, it is important to know the full story before judging people: they might turn out to be very different from expected. Sometimes it is difficult to let go of stereotypes, as they can be deeply imbedded in one's social and cultural world. Yet, (negative) stereotyping is harmful as it does not allow one to see behind "the stereotype"; to see someone's potential and positive aspects. Awareness should be raised that there are always multiple sides to a story, especially among children as they are easily influenced to think stereotypically.

Possible discussion questions

- Have you ever been stereotyped?
- What stereotypes do you have?

Additional sources

- TED talk The Danger of the Single Story: http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda adichie the danger of a single story.html
- http://alphadesigner.com/mapping-stereotypes/

Pink category Conviviality

Many indigenous communities in Mexico live without the advanced, technological appliances we use in our daily lives. From a Western viewpoint, these communities can be regarded as "backwards": how can you live without a car?; why do you use a hand-operated weaving machine while it can be a technological-operated weaving machine? What people do not seem to realize, is that many technological tools need a high level of mastery, are expensive, do not last very long and sometimes even cost more time than they should save (think about traffic jams for example: you take the car to save time and to get to a place faster, but in the end you spend more time getting there than it would have cost you with a convivial, "backward" tool, like a bike). Convivial tools are tools of a simpler kind, that need less mastery and are just as – or even more – effective in taking of pressures of the tasks faced with in our daily lives. Conviviality also offers autonomy and counteracts dominant power structures, as one is not reliable on technologically advanced tools (and on the persons/companies which possess these tools).

Possible discussion questions

- What would you do if you had to spend a day without using any technological appliances such as your computer, mobile phone, television or PlayStation?
- What are the advantages of convivial tools?

Additional sources

- http://conviviality.ouvaton.org/
- Tools for Conviviality by Ivan Illich (book): http://www.mom.arq.ufmg.br/mom/arq_interface/3a_aula/illich_tools for conviviality.pdf

Appendix B: Designed quartets







Zoociedad

nature of the

celebration



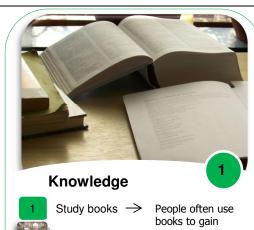
workshops











Grandparents

Teacher

You

knowledge about a certain topic. In these study books, everything is written down about a particular topic





Study books





You

Knowledge does not always have to be transmitted within the classroom to be Grandparents important. Your grandparents have lived during a time which is very different from now. They are older and have a lot of life experience. Their stories can be important sources of knowledge!



Knowledge



Study books

Grandparents



Teacher



You

The teacher is commonly regarded as a knowledgeable person as he or she has been educated to teach others. They know a lot about a specific subject (high school teachers) or know about multiple topics (primary school teacher)



Knowledge



Study books



Grandparents



Teacher



You

Yes you! You also possess a lot of valuable knowledge. Look at your hobbies for instance, maybe you know a lot about specific soccer techniques, or have learned a lot from being a scout



1 Guelaguetza

Koningdag

Día de los Muertos

Sinterklaas

Celebratory days in Mexico where different indigenous tribes show the dances and traditions of their culture



Guelaguetza

2

Koningdag



Día de los Muertos



Sinterklaas

The day on which the Dutch celebrate the birthday of their King. Everyone wears orange, the nation's colour



Fiestas



Guelaguetza



Koningdag



Día de los Muertos →



Sinterklaas

Special day in Mexico during which the deceased are remembered and their lives celebrated





Guelaguetza



Koningdag



Día de los Muertos



Sinterklaas

Family-centered Dutch tradition where children get presents from Sinterklaas & Zwarte Piet. Children sing traditional songs.



Isthmus windfarm

Padre Solalinde Denial to clubs

Gay rights

The project Mareña Renovables, run by big NGO's, aims at building an enormous windfarm in the Isthmus region. This violates the human rights of the indigenous communities living there, and they protest against their land being taken away and their sea contaminated



Isthmus windfarm

Padre Solalinde >

Denial to clubs

Gay rights

Padre Solalinde is a Mexican Catholic priest and human rights champion. He is the founder and director of Hermanos en el Camino, a shelter that provides Central American migrants with humanitarian aid, and education



Isthmus windfarm

Padre Solalinde



Denial to clubs 7



Gay rights

Denial to clubs based on someone's appearance or ethnicity is something which still occurs nowadays, also in the Netherlands. Everybody has the right to enter a public place and discrimination based on race violates one's human rights





Padre Solalinde



Denial to clubs



Gay rights

Homosexuals are still discriminated against. Isthmus windfarm They are confronted with verbal as well as physical violence. Events such as the Gay Pride, which is organized every year in the Netherlands, serve to gain more acceptance for the gay community



1 Soccer team →

Huitzo

Community house

La Vida Nueva

Together with their team mates, soccer players strive to win each game. Everybody has different talents and has to play with each other and cooperate in order to reach the grand victory



Community

Soccer team

Huitzo
Community
house

La Vida Nueva

In Huitzo, the local community is very tight. They know each other and try to help another where necessary. For example, they all combined their knowledge and effort to together build the university on this picture



Community

Soccer team

Huitzo

Community →
house

La Vida Nueva

In a community house, a group of volunteers helps to organize various activities for the neighbourhood. In this way, the neighbourhood get the opportunity to come together and get to know each other better



Soccer team

Huitzo

Community house

La Vida Nueva →

The name of a local women's weaving cooperative in Oaxaca where the female members help each other with the production and financial aspects of making and selling their woven products







Boerenkoolstamp

Tortillas

Moles





Tortillas

Moles

negro, which contains

peppers, onions, garlic

and a special plant

called hoia santa

chocolate, chili



Education



La Escuelita



Dutch high school



Unitierra

Montessori school

The first school at which indigenous people 'teach' Westerners. Formerly, people from the 'developed' West tried to impose their norms and values upon the indigenous



Education



La Escuelita



Dutch high school ->



Unitierra



Montessori school

In the Netherlands, students attend high school from the age of 12. They get a variety of subjects: ranging from History to Physics, each taught by a different teacher



La Escualita



Dutch high school



Unitierra



Montessori school

The Universidad de La Tierra is a special university in Oaxaca, Mexico. Learning from each other is an essential value in this university. Doing apprenticeships, where students gain practical knowledge, is key at Unitierra







La Escuelita



Dutch high school



Unitierra



Montessori school →

A type of school where the teaching approach is centred around the social and emotional development of its pupils. Independence, freedom of choice, talent and free will are core values





Muxes



Gothic's Migrants



Gypsies

In the Zapotec cultures of Oaxaca, a muxe is a physically male individual who dresses and behaves in ways which are associated with the female gender. In Mexico, they are regarded as a third gender









Stereotypes



Muxes



Gothic's



Migrants



ts

A subculture. The members have specific tastes: Their music includes gothic rock, dark wave and death rock. They often dress in black and have dark hear and make-up. Goths are commonly stereotyped as being depressed or associated with witchcraft





Muxes



Gothic's



Migrants →



Gypsies

People who leave their country to live in another country where they often believe they would have a better future. Migrants face discrimination and stereotyping. For example, they are seen as taking away the jobs of the local population





Muxes



Gothic's



Migrants



Gyspies

An originally a nomadic community, who travel from place to place. Nowadays, they often live in trailer parks and disadvantaged neighborhoods, secluded from the rest of society. They are commonly regarded as being unreliable, jobless or thieves



clothes, bags and small

weaving machine can be a

useful tool to enhance the

speed of the weaving and

wallets for a living. A

more within a certain

enhance efficiency)

time-span (or, to

Weaving machine therefore be able to finish

Bike

Donkey poo

Hammer



2

In Mexico, donkey

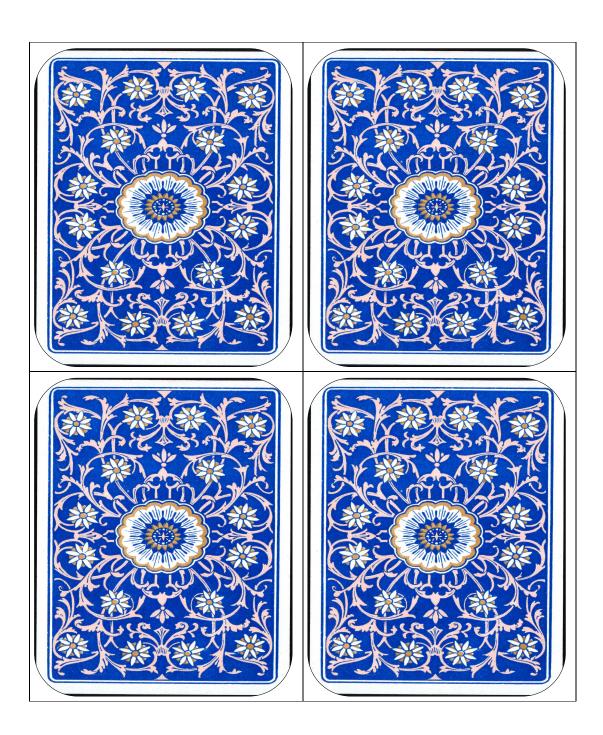
poop is used as a

environmentally-

friendly tool for

building houses

free and



Appendix C: Template quartets

