



GLOBAL PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Global Understanding (GU) Survey Results Assessment Report for Spring 2019 and Fall 2019 All Countries Combined

For more information, contact Marion Eppler (epplerm@ecu.edu)

Students should take a global understanding course because you broaden perspectives and generate a more positive vision of life, generate new learning, explore new worlds through conversations and generate new friends in other parts of the world.

---GU student from Peru

Student Characteristics

Students from 34 universities in 22 countries took the Global Understanding survey.

- 1395 students took some portion of the survey
 - 698 (50%) took only the pre-course survey; 133 (10%) took only the post-course survey
 - 564 (40%) took both the pre-course and post-course portions of the survey
- For 90% of the students, this was their first GU course.
- About two-thirds (62%) had spent time visiting or living in foreign countries (38% had no international travel experience, and 34% had less than 30 days of international travel experience).
- Only 15% of students had participated in study abroad programs.

It is an incredible opportunity to get a front-row seat at what life is really like in these countries. it changes your perception on the country and its people. You start to realise that the media is not always a reliable source of information. It is eye-opening and you get to meet new people.

---GU student from South Africa

I think that this course should be required for everyone. Our country is full of many different people and the reason why there is always hostility and turbulence between different races or cultures is because its not common or socially expected to take time to accept them and learn a little bit about their background or perspectives. This course helps us to be more sympathetic, compassionate, and vulnerable. I highly recommend this class and I loved the experience.

---GU student from USA

Student Voices (Value of the GU Course)

Should students take a Global Understanding course? WHY or WHY NOT?

The quotes above and all other quotes are responses to this question. We coded answers into categories and calculated percent of students who gave a response that fit each category (587 students answered this question).

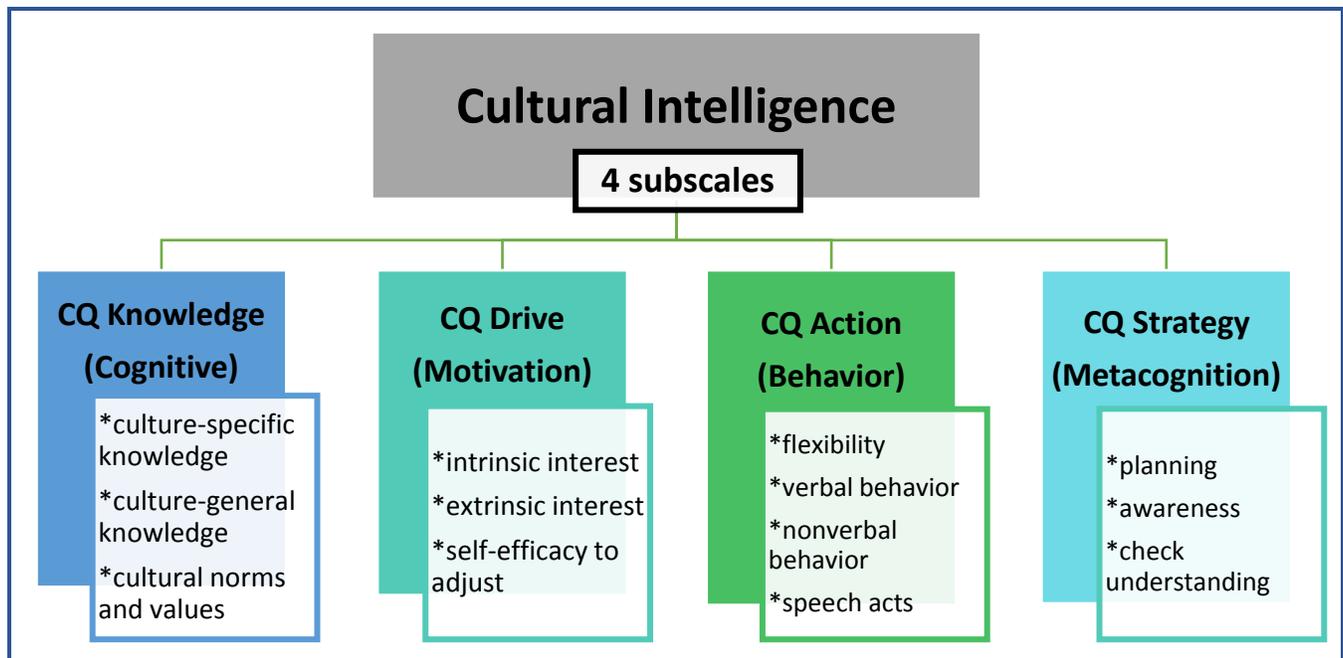
- **72% Culture & Perspectives** (The GU course is a good way to learn about different cultures and perspectives, and it is a good way to broaden your horizons. It is also good preparation for travel or study abroad.)
- **26% Communication** (The GU course helps with developing communication and language skills. It helps with learning how to interact, collaborate, and negotiate with people from different cultural backgrounds.)
- **16% Interesting** (The GU course is fun and interesting. It is generally a good experience.)
- **8% Friendship** (The GU course is a good way to develop relationships and make new friends in different countries.)
- **1% Miscellaneous skills** (The GU course helps to develop social skills and to prepare for the future.)
- **2% Not Recommended** (The GU course is not good when partners are unresponsive, when there are too many assignments, or when you are shy and uncomfortable talking.)

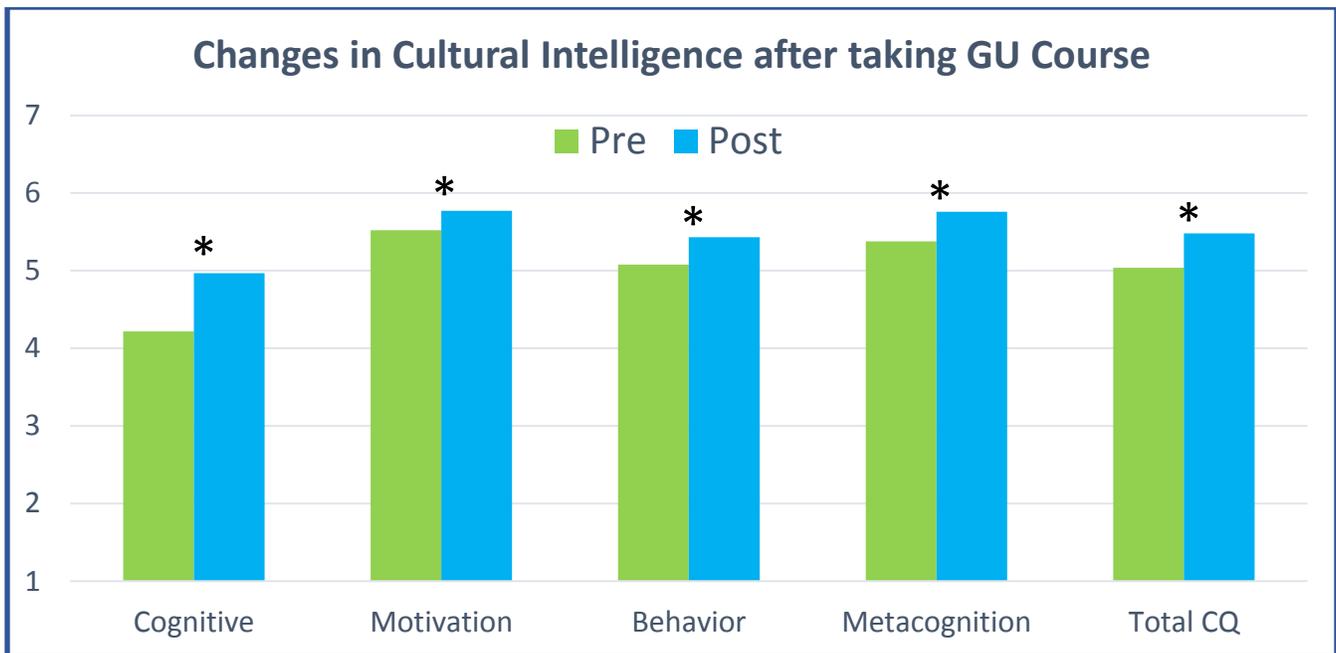
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

GU students took the CQ scale at the beginning of their GU course, and again at the end, and they showed significant pre-post increases in all areas of cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is the ability to function effectively in culturally diverse situations. The cultural intelligence scale measures ability to adapt when interacting with people from different cultures, and it includes behavior, motivation, and thinking (cognition and metacognition). Research has shown that CQ scores on thinking subscales predict ability to make accurate judgments and decisions in situations involving cultural diversity, and CQ scores on motivation and behavior subscales predict ability to adjust to different cultures with flexible and culturally appropriate actions even when cultural situations are stressful (Ang et al., 2007).

As a validity check, amount of international travel experience before taking the GU course was significantly correlated with pretest CQ scores (both total score and all subscales).





To my mind, 'Global Understanding' should be a compulsory course on each faculty, as it provides a great opportunity for students to become more aware and conscious of cultural diversity in the world, to get acquainted with the customs and traditions of foreign students, become more confident in interaction with them and share some knowledge about own country. This course shows really fruitful results of international interaction.

---GU student from Ukraine

After taking the GU course, CQ scores were significantly correlated with:

- Higher reports of being able to understand different perspectives
- Feeling less anxious and more competent when interacting with strangers from a different culture; also feeling less stressed about living in a foreign country they have never visited
- Stronger interest in international news, traveling to foreign countries, and study abroad
- Higher ratings of how much they learned about other countries and cultures, overall course satisfaction, and satisfaction with the quality of interactions with their international partners

Yes, students should take a Global Understanding course because it is really a great source to interact with other countries students and to improve your skills like communication. This helps you to get knowledge about other countries and their norms, customs and cultures, traditions and their legal law and orders. This makes a student to think in a different manner towards the future and opportunities. This course helps to get information about the countries not what the media is portraying but the real face through the local students of that specific locality and country. I really enjoyed this course and want to take another course like this, as in same pattern.

---GU student from Pakistan

Cultural Learning, Perspectives, and Interests

- 81% agreed or strongly agreed that the GU course helped them to understand different perspectives
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they learned a great deal about other countries and cultures
- 69% reported that they read about or listen to international news MORE after taking the GU course
- 80% reported that they are MORE interested in international travel after taking the GU course
- 66% reported that they are MORE interested in studying abroad after taking the GU course
- Continued Learning—significant increase: “I make extra effort to learn about other countries and cultures during my free time.” (At the beginning of the GU course, 36% said they do this often, and this increased to 47% by the end of the course.)

Yes, I think even with just 6 links, it has helped me open up to the idea of wanting to learn more about other countries. Now I want to travel more and explore other cultures.
---GU student from USA

Students should take this course especially the students who haven't traveled abroad yet. Because this kind of course boost students confidence and gain more knowledge about different cultures and know the sense of their culture. This will help them adapt with any country when they travel abroad because they'll know where to go and have connections from different countries.
---GU student from Lebanon

Yes, as this course develops the ability of empathy and understanding towards different cultures and communities. Making students understand that every country is different due to context and location and everyone has different struggles, needs and resources.
--GU student from Mexico

Communication

The GU course helped students feel comfortable interacting with people from cultures different than their own:

- 68% of students reported that they feel MORE COMPETENT interacting with strangers from a different culture after taking the GU course
- 76% reported that they feel LESS ANXIOUS OR FEARFUL interacting with strangers from a different culture after taking the GU course

I think that students who are interested in English should take that course. There will be many opportunities to use English in a practical way such as working on collaborative projects with overseas students online and talking to them in a video link. Those interactions are going to be useful to get English skills better. In my case, I got a great experience in this course. I got to know with a Malaysian student at Taiwanese university. Interacting with her, I felt that my English still has room for improvement, and her English includes a sense of humor which I try to obtain, so meeting her got me motivated pretty much, and I think that it was the experience I could get because I took this course.

---GU student from Japan

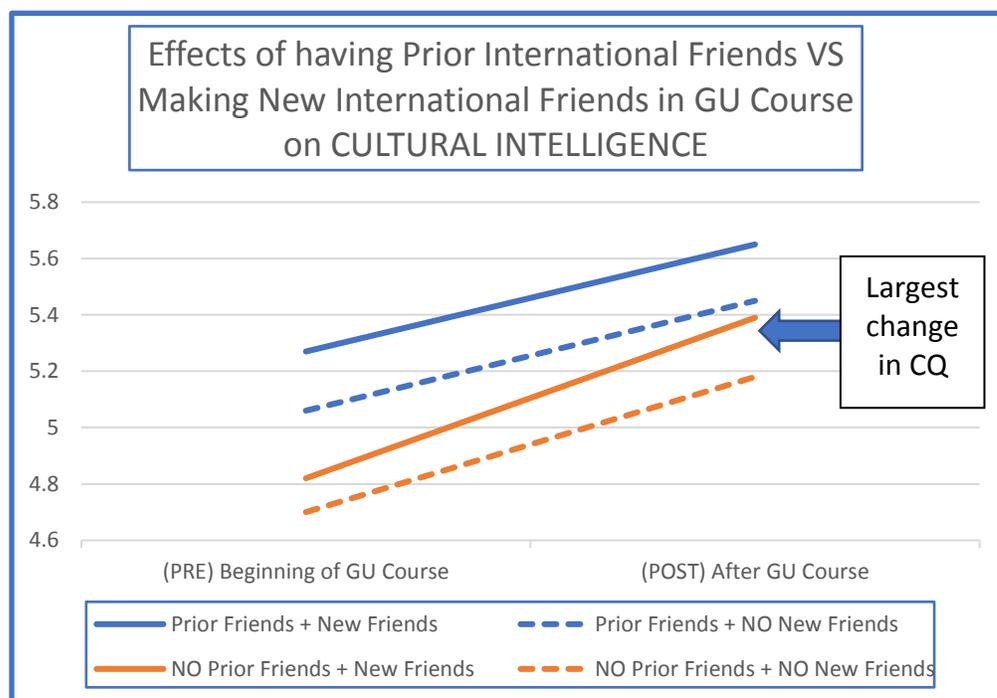
Yes, they should. It provided me an opportunity to learn about people who come from other countries. In addition, the course requires everyone to speak, due to this, now I become more confident, when I hold the microphone to speak in front of the class and faced the screen to exchange ideas with foreign students, I can speak aloud instead of the soft voice and afraid of making mistakes like ever before. It really changed me a lot.

---GU student from China

Friendship

- Before beginning the GU course, 63% of students already had international friends.
- During the GU course, more than half (65%) of students reported that they developed a close friendship with at least one of their international partners.

- This graph shows that all four groups increased their CQ scores after taking the GU course.
- Students who had international friends before the GU course had higher CQ scores overall than students who did not have prior international friends.
- Students who made friends during the GU course had higher CQ scores overall than students who did not make new international friends.



- Students who had no prior international friends but who made new international friends during the GU course tended to have the largest increase in their CQ scores.
- **Students who developed a close friendship with one of their partners during the GU course differed from students who reported no close friendships on several measures:**
 - Higher scores on cultural intelligence (CQ)
 - Stronger reports that the GU course helped them to understand different perspectives
 - Stronger reports that they learned a great deal about other countries and cultures during the GU course and they make extra effort to learn about other countries and cultures during their free time
 - More interested in reading about or listening to international news, traveling to different countries, and study abroad
 - Higher satisfaction with partner interactions both during and outside of class time
 - Higher overall satisfaction with the GU course

Why was it difficult for you to become friends with your Global Understanding partners (students from other countries)?

New for this year, we asked students to identify barriers to making friends with their GU partners. Students who indicated that they had not become friends with any of their GU partners were asked this question, and we coded their answers into categories and calculated percent of students who gave a response that fit each category (222 students answered this question).

30% Low Motivation or Interest

- Students or partners did not respond to email messages outside of class time.
- Students described partners as seeming to lack motivation or interest in communication.

18% Limited to a Working Relationship

- Students or partners focused on class-related topics and the collaborative project, and they did not discuss other more personal topics.
- Students even described this as a work relationship, saying that they were not interested in making friends and just wanted to get the assignments completed.
- Students or partners were not interested in continuing contact after the linking sessions were over.

17% Language Barriers or Communication Problems

- Students described their own or their partners' English skills as weak, making it difficult to answer questions and to fully express themselves.
- Students described themselves or their partners as shy or not very talkative.

16% Different Time Zones and Schedules

- Students prefer to communicate synchronously, so they often mentioned differing time zones or having vastly different schedules as a major problem for working with partners.
- Students mentioned long delays between sending messages and getting responses as a problem.

11% Too Busy

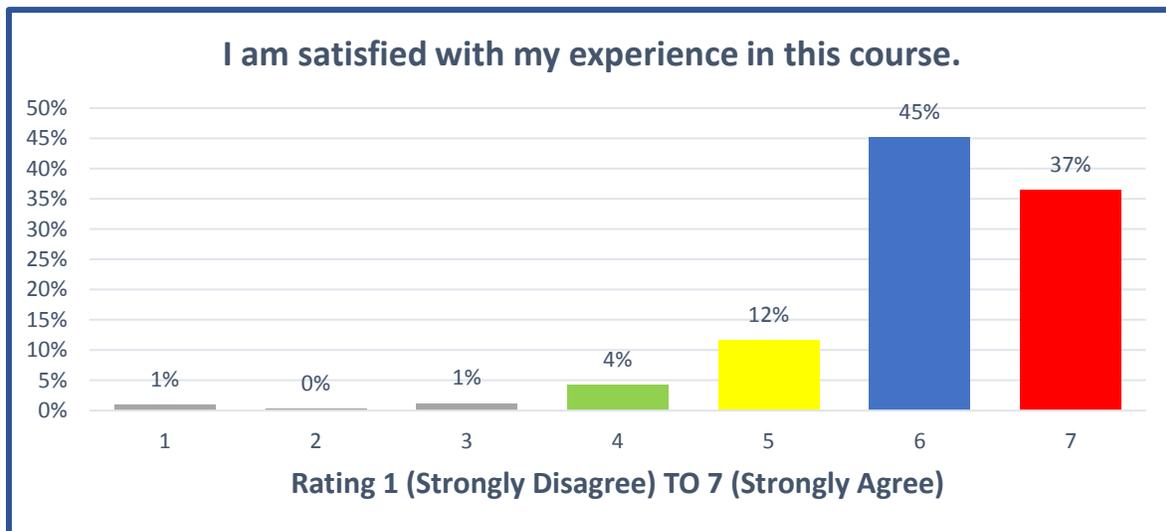
- Students or partners have difficult school, work, and/or family obligations, so they are too busy to make friends with people they will probably never meet in person.

OTHER REASONS

- Technology problems or not using the same apps.
- Hard to find common interests.
- Class time with a country was too short to establish ongoing communication after links.
- Hard to build relationships over text and email without face-to-face interaction.
- Hard to be friends with someone who lives so far away that you will never meet.

I think they should [take a GU course] IF they are actually interested in learning more about other cultures because we have encountered students who barely even cared. They have not prepared the class, did not have questions to ask us. Also, some did not even pay attention to what we were saying (they were on their phones while we were answering a question). However, for those who were interested, I think it was a highly enriching and rewarding experience. I made a new friend, who I am still in touch with, and we keep finding out new things about each other's culture almost every day. --GU student from France

Course Satisfaction



88% have already recommended GU course to other students

64% have recommended GU course multiple times

90% are interested in taking another GU course

- Overall satisfaction with the quality of interaction with partners was good. A majority of students (71%) agreed or strongly agreed.
- Satisfaction with the amount of communication with partners outside of class time was lower (58% of students agreed or strongly agreed).

Conclusion

I think that other students should take course because it's a challenge, it's like leaving your comfort zone. This because it allows to you learn about other cultures, change your perspectives. Also because it inspires you to want to know other countries and people. I'll definitely recommend the program. Thanks for the opportunity.

---GU student from Peru

References

Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., Koh, C., Ng, K. Y., Templer, K. J., Tay, C., & Chandrasekar, N. A. (2007). Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance. *Management and Organization Review*, 3, 335-371.