MEASURING CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE (CQ) GROWTH IN SUMMER HOMESTAY, STUDY-ABROAD STUDENTS

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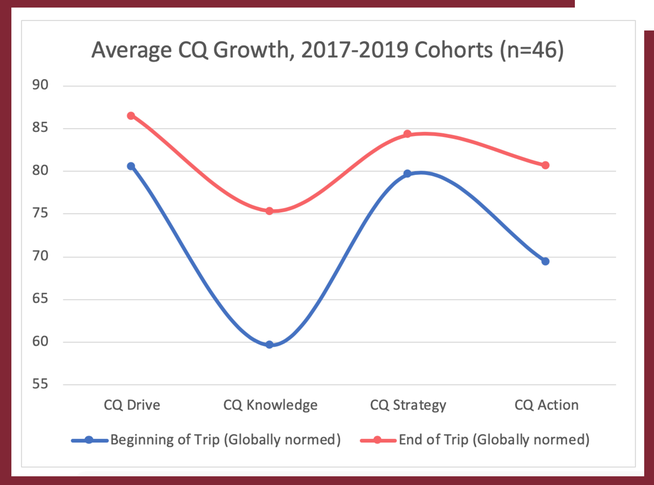
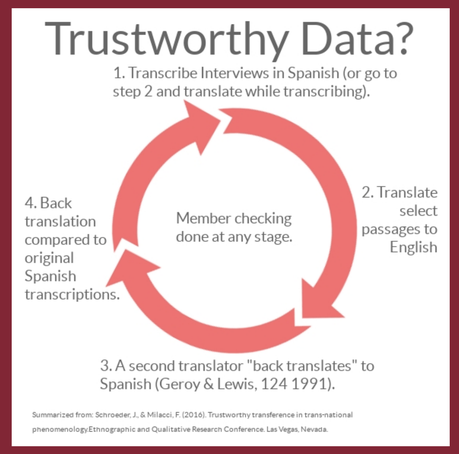
Key Takeaways

- Students motivated to engage culture, but perceived lack of knowledge (cultural and linguistic) inhibits interactions and, by extension, CQ. More confidence = more interactions = more growth.
- Host families eager to share. Many meet this need among themselves in WhatsApp chats or in casual conversation.
- Families become savvy about how to "design" the best homestay experience, and having students can constitute social capital.
- Homestays prove transformational for students and families alike, breaking down barriers and overcoming negative or naïve stereotyping.
- Brought in additional interviewer/researcher for 2019 interviews in Guatemala.





Background

*20 years of on-the-field experience. Students regularly report having transformative experiences in their summer, enhanced study abroad (Harper 2018) internships in Guatemala. This two-month trip includes a substantial missions-based component, in addition to the language learning focus. Thus, besides growing in oral proficiency or spiritual development, as students themselves state, we hypothesized that they also grow in Cultural Intelligence (CQ).

*Research on mid-length trips is still sparse, though a two-month trip could be considered "short term" (Kamdar, Lewis 2015).

*University funded. IRB approved. Data collection: 2017-2020

Method

*CQ Scale (CQS) and Semi-Structured Phenomenological Interviews of students:

*Administered internationally-normed CQS measures student growth at beginning and end of trip (n=46). Results used to select interview participants.

*Follow-up interviews (n=20) with students over the course of three years/cohorts so far.

*Then, conducted interviews (n=25) on site, in Guatemala, with students' home-stay families, in Spanish in 2018-2019.

*Transcription in English and Spanish. Interview data in Spanish is translated as needed. Back-translations on quoted material per Schroeder and Milacci 2016 to ensure reliability. See graphic "Trustworthy Data?".

Findings

*Nearly all students grow in CQ. CQ training pre-trip might have an effect, too.

*Motivation shift: extrinsic > intrinsic, despite high CQ Drive scores. Contradicts some research, for example, Livermore 2015.

*Increase in language proficiency made students want to engage culture more.

*Doubts about language proficiency can be a major inhibitor to engage culture.

*Move beyond stereotyping to humanizing language when describing Guatemalans.

**Confianza:* students and families engage in unspoken trust-building processes that ultimately drive the experience, and thus, CQ growth.

-Food
-Family
-Activities.

*Students end up having a considerable impact on the families, and vice versa. Also, hosting students brings incentives, social capital, and contact with English language and US culture.

Future Research

*Location is visited by dozens of US-based religious groups per year. Results would likely differ if the locale had less contact with foreign cultures.

*Less religiously affiliated families and students.

Limitations

*Authority dynamic: Interviewers are students' professors. Location or means of interviewing (by phone at times) might cause stress.

*Authority culture: Two male researchers, authority figures, interviewing mostly women in Guatemala.

*UPDATE: Female, Latina faculty member traveled to Guatemala to conduct interviews in December 2019. Elicited similar, though more nuanced, data.