

Cultural Intelligence & Recognizing Our Own Cultural Biases

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Definition

Cultural intelligence is the ability to relate and work effectively across cultures, i.e., possessing an understanding of culture and the relevance of language and cultural values, as well as mindfulness of one's own behaviors in intercultural contexts and the capacity to apply this knowledge in ministry and community life.

David Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*



Objectives

- A self-awareness exercise
- A review of the important elements of cultural intelligence
- Discuss practical scenarios of intercultural interactions
- Introduce a tool for assessing one's own cultural intelligence



Self-Awareness

- Stop and think. What group represents the “other” for you?
- To which culture or subculture do you find it hardest to relate?
- In what context do the skills that usually come to you naturally feel incredibly awkward and strained?
- Think about five different cultural contexts you most regularly encounter. What ethnic cultures are present in your community and in your ministry?



Self-Awareness

- What specific behaviors indicate that you accept others?
- What behaviors are inclusive of others?
- What are examples of your bias?
- Are you in a position of privilege?



Elements of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

1. Knowledge CQ: Understanding cross-cultural issues and differences
2. Interpretive CQ: The degree to which we’re mindful and aware when we interact cross-culturally
3. Perseverance CQ: Our level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally
4. Behavioral CQ: The extent to which we appropriately change our verbal and nonverbal actions when we interact cross-culturally



Knowledge CQ

Knowledge (cognitive) CQ refers to one's level of understanding culture and its role in shaping behavior and social interactions. Learning the language of a culture is only a first step.

- Cultural characteristics
- History
- Values
- Belief systems
- Behaviors
- How people think



Knowledge CQ also involves understanding how people in another cultural context are likely to view us in light of our cultural contexts.



Interpretive CQ

Interpretive CQ measures the ability to be mindful and aware as we interact with people from different cultural contexts. It's one thing to have knowledge about cross-cultural issues. It's another to understand what is occurring in a cross-cultural encounter.



Interpretive CQ calls for a reflective, open mind-set. It requires tremendous patience. The desire to get things done and obtain results can be counter productive. In our context - having sufficient priests and religious to serve the needs of the Church may tempt us to rush through the processes of admission and formation.



Perseverance CQ

Perseverance CQ measures one's level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally. Knowledge of cross-cultural issues and a reflective disposition are essential. However, the *willingness* to draw on this knowledge and interact in an effective manner is crucial.



Cultural Competence

- Critical Awareness
- Cultural Knowledge
- Skills Development
- Application
- Organizational Support
- Desire to Engage



Intercultural Scenarios

A 21 year old man is coming for a vocation weekend and asks whether he can bring his mother with him to meet you?

- How would knowing the culture of the man influence your response?
- How does a multicultural formation community make rules for family interactions?



Intercultural Scenarios

The house schedule indicates 5pm as the starting time for meditation. A Novice Sister arrives 10 minutes late routinely.

- How would knowing her culture influence a response?
- The Novice Mistress is younger than the Novice. Should that affect your response?



Intercultural Scenarios

A seminarian from Mexico will often speak with you in Spanish, saying he appreciates how fluent you are. Later, he makes a remark about his frustration with the Rector, who only speaks English and “does not understand” the seminarian’s culture.

- What are the pitfalls to avoid?



A Self-Assessment Tool – Section A

Section A

Which of the following choices best describes you when you are in situations characterized by cultural diversity? Circle either A or B (not both) for each question to indicate which better describes you as you are most of the time.

1. Would you rather work with someone who is from
A. the same or a similar culture, or
B. a very different culture?
2. When you are with a person from a different culture, do you
A. plan what you say, or
B. act spontaneously?



A Self-Assessment Tool

3. Do you like to
A. travel in your home country, or
B. travel to faraway places?
4. When you know you will be meeting someone from a different culture, do you
A. script what you want to say before you start, or
B. treat him or her as you would any other person from your own culture?
5. Do you typically
A. assume many roles, or
B. adopt one primary role?



A Self-Assessment Tool

6. At parties with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, do you
A. mimic other people, or
B. maintain your own style?
7. In your daily work, would you prefer a job in a culture that is
A. similar to your own, or
B. different from your own?



A Self-Assessment Tool – Section B

Imagine that you are in a situation where you are interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Circle the answer (A or B) that best describes you. Don't overthink your response.

- 35. In cross-cultural situations, you are
 - A. spontaneous.
 - B. careful to plan.
- 36. In cross-cultural situations, you are
 - A. predictable.
 - B. flexible.



A Self-Assessment Tool – Section B

- 37. In cross-cultural situations, you are
 - A. attracted.
 - B. indifferent.
- 38. In cross-cultural situations, you are
 - A. systematic.
 - B. casual.
- 39. In cross-cultural situations, you are
 - A. neutral.
 - B. engaged.

<http://www.culturalq.com>



QUESTIONS



Resources:

- Balcazar, Fabricio, Suarez-Balcazar, Y, and Tina Taylor Ritzler, "Cultural Competence: Development of a Conceptual Framework," *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 2009, 31 (14), pp. 1153-1160.
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- Paniagua, Freddy A. & Ann-Marie Yamada. *Handbook of Multicultural Mental Health: Assessment and Treatment of Diverse Populations*, 2nd Edition. Academic Press: San Diego, 2013.



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