



GLOBAL PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Global Understanding (GU) Survey Results
Assessment Report for Spring 2020 and Fall 2020
All Countries Combined

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Value of the GU course in their own words:

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

All quotes are responses to this question (565 students answered the question).

Students should or even must take this GU course because it allows to speak freely with unknown people and there is no better way to learn language and values such as tolerance, open-mindedness, friendships abroad... It's such a wonderful human experience!
--GU student from France

Student Characteristics

Students from 33 universities in 20 countries took the Global Understanding survey.

- 1127 students took some portion of the survey
 - 480 (43%) took only the pre-course survey; 127 (11%) took only the post-course survey
 - 520 (46%) took both the pre-course and post-course portions of the survey
- For 92% of the students, this was their first GU course.
- About two-thirds (63%) had spent time visiting or living in foreign countries (37% had NO international travel experience, and 34% had less than 30 days of international travel experience).

I strongly recommend that every student should take a Global Understanding course, because it seems to me that it really helps to improve our ability to understand and work effectively with people from diverse cultures, in addition to overcome cross-cultural differences, which is very important to our generation that will move or work in diverse social environments.
--GU student from Morocco

Yes, students must take this course once a year. As when individual interact with people they learn more about them, their culture and tradition, about their society in comparison to learning from social media or the internet. And individual also came to distinguish between the reality and the sham people post on social media.
--GU student from Pakistan

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

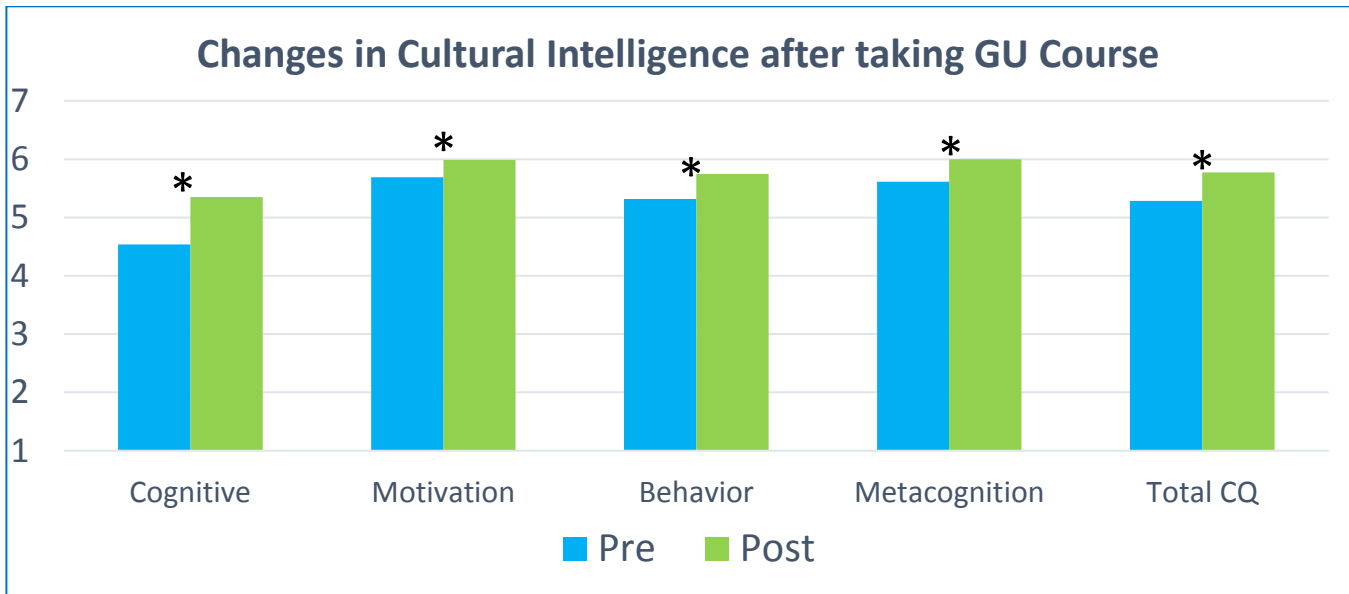
GU students took the CQ scale at the beginning of their GU course and again at the end.

***Students showed significant pre-post increases in all areas of cultural intelligence.**

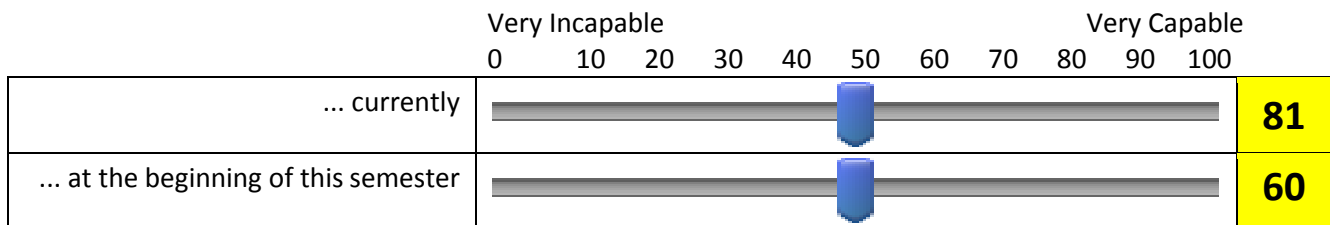
Cultural intelligence (CQ) is the ability to function effectively in culturally diverse situations. The cultural intelligence scale measures ability to adapt when interacting with people from different cultures, and it includes behavior, motivation, and thinking (cognition and metacognition). Research 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).

- Behavior/Action—adapting behavior to fit different cultural contexts (e.g., adjusting verbal and nonverbal communication)
- Motivation/Drive—level of curiosity and desire to learn about other cultures; persistence and confidence when a multicultural situation is ambiguous or challenging
- Cognition/Knowledge—understanding how cultures are similar and different (e.g., knowing values and norms)
- Metacognition/Strategy—awareness, checking, and planning for multicultural interactions

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).



Student perceptions of change in cultural intelligence matched the significant changes in their CQ scores: “How would you rate your capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings...”



I think that students should take a Global Understanding course because it brings many new experiences to our lives. I think that for some people a Global Understanding course is one of just a few opportunities in their life to meet foreign people and to talk with them in comfortable way, like friend with friend. In my opinion the course was very valuable because I have learned new interesting things about people, countries and cultures over the world.

--GU student from Poland

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

Students should take a Global Understanding course because is a great way to practice and develop both language and communication skills. In my opinion, it has contributed to developing a greater interest in traveling and knowing more about cultures and I'm happy with the outcome after taking this course. I could also make international friends, so it was a great experience overall.

--GU student from Peru

Cultural Learning, Perspectives, and Interests

- 84% 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
- 75% reported that they read about or listen to international news MORE after taking the GU course
- 81% reported that they are MORE interested in international travel after taking the GU course
- 67% 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, 38% said they do this often, and this increased to 57% by the end of the course.)

I think it's better to take this course. Because when I live in Japan, I don't usually have many opportunities to talk to foreigners. It is said that the global society will advance in the future, so I think it is better to participate in this course and have the experience of talking with foreigners in order to become a foreigner as much as possible.

--GU student from Japan

Yes, because even though it was out of my comfort zone at first, I am glad I was pushed to establish communications with people in other cultures and it was an enriching experience. It also expanded and solidified the ideas I had about my own culture, as I have taken a step back to really evaluate why America is the way it is. I think it would be good for people who are less tolerant of other cultures to experience this class because I think many Americans have a more narrow world-view than they realize.

--GU student from USA

Yes, because it's going to open your mind much more and you can have the opportunity to talk to other students from different countries and to broke up those stereotypes that you had about some of them.

--GU student from Mexico

Communication

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

- 72% of students reported that they feel MORE COMPETENT interacting with strangers from a different culture after taking the GU course
- 79% reported that they feel LESS ANXIOUS OR FEARFUL interacting with strangers from a different culture after taking the GU course

Intercultural contact outside of class time matters:

- Higher satisfaction with the amount of contact GU students had with international partners outside of class time was strongly correlated with higher CQ scores, stronger understanding of different perspectives, greater learning about different countries and cultures, and higher overall course satisfaction.

I think it's a good thing for students to take a Global Understanding course. Because in this course our oral English was improved, and we don't be shy anymore. It brings out our confidence. At the same time we learn other's country culture. So I think it's a win-win relationship during this class.

--GU student from China

Students should take this course thanks to the possibility to improve their oral expression. Moreover, they could also improve their capacity to meet new people. I think this course is profitable either for shy people or enterprising people. I admit that it is not easy to speak without stress in front of all the class. Nevertheless, in private with the international partner it's easier to speak about diverse topics. This course allowed me to meet wonderful people, learn more about their culture and become more confident.

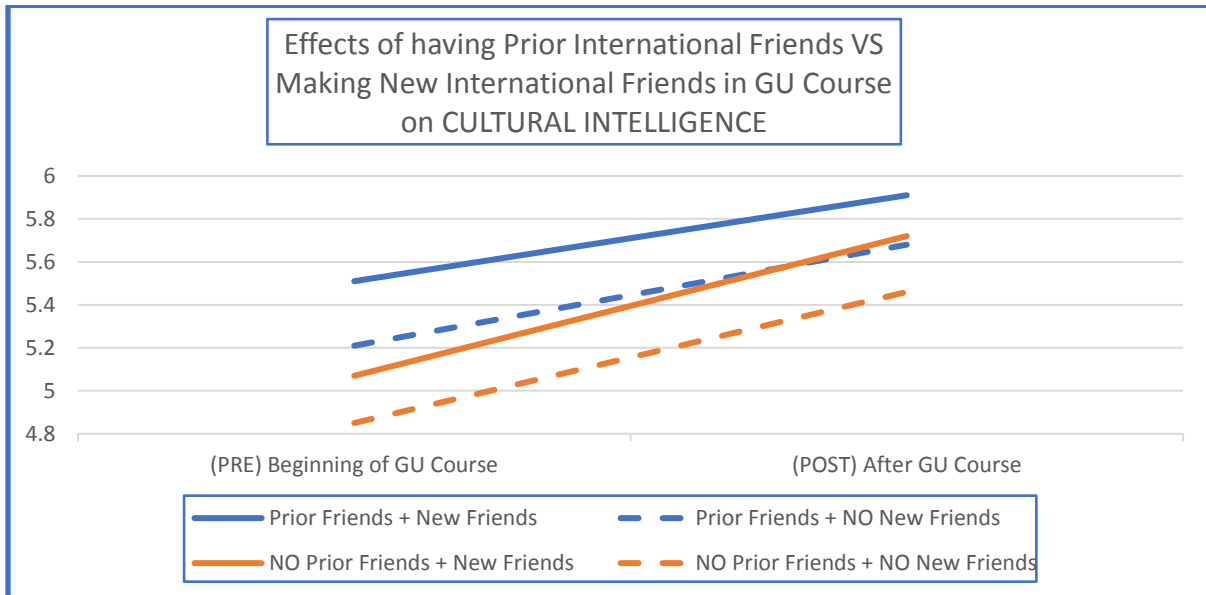
--GU student from France

Sure, student should take this course, since it is a great experience and opportunity to learn and be informed about different cultures, to improve communication skills, to gain empathy and to learn the importance of respecting others and to lessen or destroy stereotyping.

--GU student from Lebanon

Friendship

- Before beginning the GU course, 66% of students already had international friends.
- During the GU course, more than two-thirds (71%) 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 and then made new friends during the GU course (solid blue line) had the highest CQ scores overall.
- Students who did not have prior international friends (two orange lines) showed larger increases in CQ scores than students who did have prior international friends (two blue lines).
- Although they benefitted from the GU course, students with no prior international friends who also did not make new friends in the GU course (dashed orange line) had the lowest 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 much and make extra effort to learn about other countries and cultures
- More interested in 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

GU student interactions were overwhelmingly positive

- 82% of students described contact with GU partners as positive/pleasant always or most of the time, and 94% described contact as negative/unpleasant only sometimes or never
- Higher levels of positive contact was correlated with higher CQ scores, stronger interest in international news, travel, and study abroad, and greater learning and understanding of different perspectives

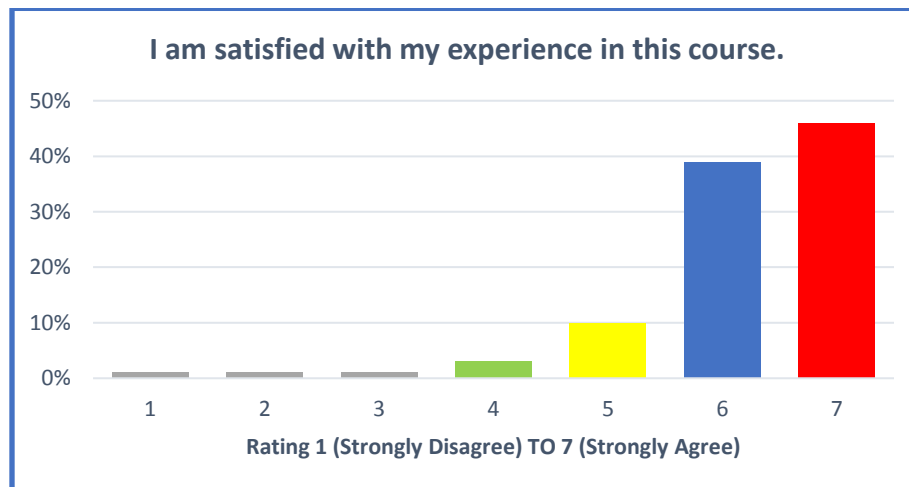
Yes, I think everyone should take a GUC because I had so much fun talking to my partners. I made new friends and I've learned a lot of things about new cultures, religion, traditions and food and extremely a lot of other things. The most important thing is me and my partners we're still friends and we talk nearly everyday, it was a great experience and I would recommend it to all my friends

--GU student from Algeria

Challenges to making friends with GU partners

- 34% reported low motivation or interest beyond a working relationship—partners were focused mostly on class assignments and topics; contact was limited to class time; interactions stopped when links were finished
- 32% reported social challenges—students were unable to connect personally or had no common interests; linking time was too short to establish bonds; difficult to make friends in virtual environment
- 13% reported language barriers or communication problems—weak English skills or too shy
- 11% reported scheduling problems—different time zones and mismatched schedules or too busy
- 9% reported pandemic-related or technology problems

Course Satisfaction



88% have already recommended GU course to other students

60% have recommended GU course multiple times

87% are interested in taking another GU course

- Overall satisfaction with the quality of interaction with partners was good. A majority of students (73%) agreed or strongly agreed.
- Satisfaction with the amount of communication with partners outside of class time was slightly lower (67% of students agreed or strongly agreed)—but about a 10% increase over previous years.

Conclusion

They should absolutely take because it allows us to think differently and to accept different points of view. It's like a virtual world tour. I learned to tolerate different ideas and beliefs even if they are opposite to mine. The course had some tension a few times because of the difference in sensitive beliefs and cultures, however, before the end of the course we all overcome this issue and we embraced all beliefs in the end.

--GU student from Lebanon

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.