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Changing Roles of Legal Information Professionals: Adapting Your Skills to New Challenges

Michele Villagran
University of North Texas

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Changing Roles of Legal Information Professionals: Adapting Your Skills to New Challenges

Cultural Intelligence

Dr. Michele A. L. Villagran

CQ Certified Facilitator

Lecturer, University of North Texas

President & CEO, CulturalCo, LLC

Agenda

- Culture Matters
- What is Cultural Intelligence (CQ)?
 - Four capabilities
- Mapping Cultural Differences
 - Cultural value orientations
- Applying and Improving CQ
- Now what?

Cultural Intelligence

What is it, how to apply & improve

Cultural Intelligence

The capability to function effectively across various cultural contexts (national, ethnic, organizational, generational, etc.)

--Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne, “Conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence” in Handbook of Cultural Intelligence: Theory, Measurement, and Applications (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 3.



CQ Drive: 3 Sub-Dimensions

- Intrinsic Interest
- Extrinsic Interest
- Self-Efficacy

Individual Drive

- “I am a very driven and motivated person and when I encounter something different, I want to do a better job in order to make sure I have left a good impression of myself and my library.”
- “Law librarians are expected to have the drive and motivation necessary to tackle anything that comes up....As a general rule, the firm’s information needs are expected to be met by the library - whatever that requires.”

Diversity

“I try to be aware of cross cultural situation especially when dealing with our clients and younger associates. ...I am noticing more diversity among our “American” staff, attorneys, and clients as well. This is not limited to the obvious issues of race - we have more mixed race staff and people who are more open about their lifestyles.”

CQ Knowledge: 4 Sub-Dimensions

- Business/Cultural Systems
- Interpersonal: Cultural Values
- Socio-Linguistics
- Leadership

Cultural Values

- Individualism-Collectivism
- Power Distance
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Cooperative-Competitive
- Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation
- Context
- Being-Doing

Individual Knowledge

- “I believe exposure to others in other social environments within the firm would aid in the cultural understanding. By this I mean more than when a patron comes to the library to request something specific or request guidance for a research project.”
- “Knowing what foreign counsel is, and is not, saying; cultural norms may preclude counsel from offering negative opinion or sharing certain information unless asked point-blank. I did this with Indonesian counsel after it was clear my boss was not “getting” the unspoken message.”

CQ Strategy: 3 Sub-Dimensions

- Planning
- Awareness
- Checking

Individual Strategy

- “It is often frustrating to have to lobby to firm management to have extra expenses for new services approved when it is all part of the effort to make the new groups functional and profitable!”
- “If a new employee with a different education background, different social background joins our team I would want them to feel as welcome as possible and comfortable in their new environment. Strong librarian skills begin with strong communication and critical thinking skills. If one is nervous or uncomfortable in a work environment it will be hard to build either of these skill sets.”

Individual Strategy

- “Even more frustrating is dealing with vendors... that seek to preserve revenue streams from smaller firms, or larger ones that have fallen apart, by including language in subscription licensing agreements that essentially require the “new” firm to assume responsibility for paying the former firm's contract value.”
- “There is frustration when online legal research databases change constantly, but it would be worse if the vendors didn't modernize, and we are spoiled by such wonderful resources.”

CQ Action: 3 Sub-Dimensions

- Speech Acts
- Verbal Communication
- Non-Verbal Communication

Individual Action

- “Learning to communicate effectively with members of a law firm is essential for law librarians. We assist everyone from managing partners to legal administrative assistants. Understanding cultural differences allow us to tailor the assistance we give to individuals, instead of one standard that is applied to all.”

My Research

**EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE WITHIN
LAW FIRM LIBRARIANS IN THE UNITED STATES:
A MIXED METHODS STUDY**

Purpose

- The purpose of the mixed methods study is to explore the cultural intelligence of law firm librarians in the United States.
- A single-phase concurrent nested strategy was used in order to understand the phenomena of their own cultural intelligence and to help them better serve their law firm stakeholders.

Problem

- Globalization
- Legal sector shifts
 - Business models
 - Performance
 - Culture
- Demand shifts
 - Clients
 - Librarians
 - Skills needed (Fidler, 2012)
 - Adaptability
- Costs
- Value
- Cultural intelligence scarce

My Research Questions

- What is the overall level of cultural intelligence of participating law firm librarians?
- What variations among participating law firm librarians, if any, exist among the four capabilities of cultural intelligence?
- What viewpoints do the law firm librarians have about the value and importance of cultural intelligence within their law firms?

Importance & Value

“Law firms should respond to their clients in a manner consistent with the client’s cultural background. Furthermore, CQ helps members of a law firm understand each other in a significant way, enabling greater communication, understanding, and collective interrelations.”

- “CQ is a critical component to being able to understand the client’s needs as well as their perspective”

Importance & Value

- Participants viewed clients, human interaction, communication and environment as key elements when it comes to discussing value
 - Introducing new staff
 - Adapt better if staff know how to communicate
 - Aware of diversity and differences within cultures
 - Patrons and clients understanding their needs: benefits
 - Environment / Climate changes
 - Technology
- Work librarian does (i.e., research requests) are valued

Conclusions

- Law firm librarians have a strong sense of value and importance of CQ to their law firms
- Law firm librarians have varying levels of CQ within each of the four CQ factors
- Librarian's feel valued and appreciated within their law firms
- Law firm librarians cope with cultural challenges and have to adapt to unfamiliar environments

Closing Comments

- Construct of CQ is important to understand and incorporate as industry and information profession changes
- Globalization is impacting how we work
- Skills needed are shifting and librarians are in a unique position
- Going beyond awareness can help improve interactions with stakeholders – use CQ!

Next Steps

- Needs assessment
- Cultural Values Profile
- Cultural Intelligence Assessment
- Assess and develop CQ in your team
- Make CQ a priority for everyone



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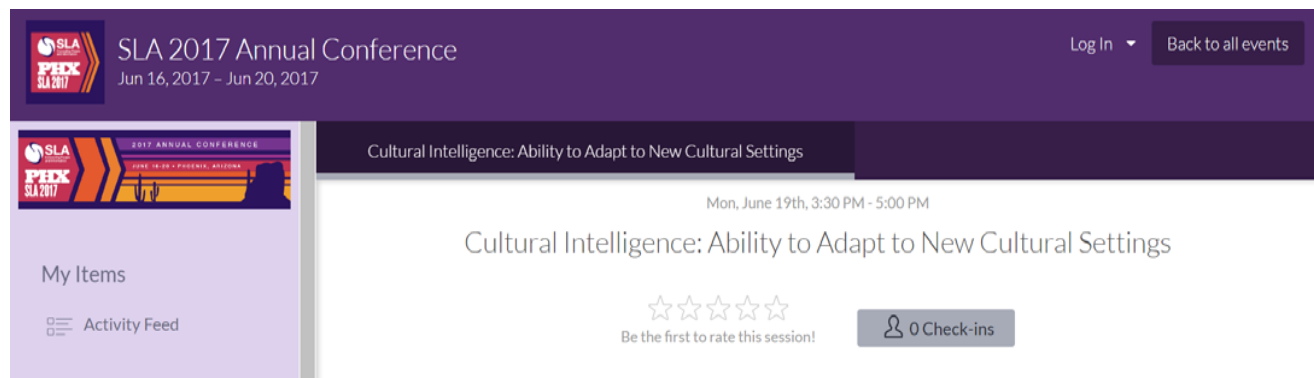
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- For additional research: <https://culturalq.com/articles-books/>

Want more detail?

Cultural Intelligence: Ability to Adapt to New Cultural Settings

90-minute session on Monday, June 19

3:30 – 5:00 pm



Thank You! Q/A

Dr. Michele A. L. Villagran

CQ Certified Facilitator

Lecturer, University of North Texas

President & CEO, CulturalCo, LLC

michele.villagran@unt.edu

michele.villagran@culturalco.com

<https://culturalco.com>

626-703-1903

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/culturalco-llc>

<https://twitter.com/culturalcollc>

<https://www.facebook.com/culturalco/>