The search for the “certain global something” that makes some individuals more effective in intercultural interactions than others has a deep history. Anthropological research has long dealt with cultural aspects of communication and the early sojourner adjustment literature was concerned with determining an overseas type of person. Recent work, based in cognitive theory, provided the potential for integrated explanations that combine cognitive structures and societal context to understand action. This work gave rise to the construct of cultural intelligence. In this presentation I trace the development of the cultural intelligence idea, culminating in the introduction and validation of the Short Form Cultural Intelligence Scale (SFCQ; Thomas et al., 2015).