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Abstract

As a response to the intercultural challenges of Geography Education, this study seeks to determine factors fostering intercultural competence of student teachers. Based on a one-week multicultural field excursion of 8 German and 8 Turkish students in Kayseri (Turkey) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), we used qualitative interviews to evaluate changes in the 16 student teachers' intercultural competence. Findings strongly indicate that multicultural fieldwork fosters intercultural learning on a personal level.

Key words: multicultural fieldwork, intercultural learning, intercultural competence, geographical education, teacher education, qualitative research

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Introduction

Fieldwork, in one guise or another, is an integral and recognized component of geography undergraduate provision around the world. It is an essential part of Geoscience Studies as well as a crucial element of Educational Studies of prospective Geography teachers. It is perceived by both staff and students to provide a valuable opportunity for the development of learning and teaching (Boyle et al., 2003; Dummer, Cook, Parker, Barrett, & Hull, 2008; Higgitt, 1996; Jenkins, 1994; King, 2003; Prentice, 1991), as it can foster critical reflection and offer insight into cultural difference. The lived intercultural experience is key to gaining a meaningful understanding of other cultures as well as of one's own place in an interconnected world (Cushner, 2007). Ideally, students of higher education should be engaged in multicultural student group work, and gain experience in working in culturally heterogeneous groups (Popov et al., 2012). Furthermore, collaborating with students from different cultural backgrounds is believed to foster creativity and open-mindedness (Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander, & Maznevski, 2010; Williams & Johnson, 2011). A study by Oetzel (1998) on 75 European American students and 51 Japanese international students of an US community college found that cultural diversity within the groups can improve group performance, as group members absorb one another's different perspectives and mindsets and thus expanded their focus. Moreover, discussing these diverse perceptions enables students to build life-long learning

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skills (Chiang, Leung, Chui, Leung, & Mak, 2013). Studies have also shown that multicultural groups struggle with more process and communication problems than do culturally homogeneous groups (Watson, Cooper, Torres, & Boyd, 2008). However, regular feedback sessions reduce these problems over time, eventually resulting in higher team performance levels of culturally diverse groups (Watson et al, 2008; Watson, Johnson & Zgourides, 2002).

In the present climate, there is an increasing need for pre-service teachers to have significant cross-cultural experiences that enable them to teach with, work with, and continue to learn from people of different cultural backgrounds. According to the official micro census of 2013, most of Germany's inhabitants with a migration background are people from Turkey, which is reflected in a high number of students with Turkish origin in German schools (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014). For this reason, it is essential for German teachers to develop intercultural competence, especially regarding Turkish culture. Furthermore, teachers have to respond to heterogeneous qualities among their students, such as cultural background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ideology and many others. In university and teacher training already, student teachers should experience this diversity as enriching rather than problematic. Therefore, both in Germany and in Turkey, multicultural teacher qualifications and measures to facilitate these competencies are gradually gaining importance. Today's multicultural and internationally interconnected classrooms provide new challenges for teachers (van Tarwijk, den Brok, Veldman, & Wubbels 2009), especially with regard to intercultural differentiated instruction. Intercultural experiences have the capacity to change the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward a diversity of students, and to facilitate an understanding of multicultural education (Yang & Montgomery, 2013)

In this paper, intercultural competence is understood as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes", as defined by Deardorff (2004, p.194). According to her Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Figure 1) Deardorff (2006) considers intercultural competence to consist of the components *Attitudes*, *Knowledge & Comprehension*, and *Skills* (on a personal level), which all lead to *Internal* and *External Outcomes* (on an interpersonal/interactive level). The degree to which these components are achieved are supposed to indicate the level of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

A significantly different model of intercultural competence is proposed by Hammer and Bennett (Bennett, 2004; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). Here, intercultural competence is perceived as a series of different levels leading from ethnocentrism (experiencing one's own culture as central to reality) to ethnorelativism (experiencing one's own culture in the context of other cultures), which can be detected by a psychological survey (Hammer et al., 2003). A well-structured overview of this model is given by Schrüfer (2011, see Figure 2).

In this study, we aimed to extract factors which foster or obstruct intercultural learning on multicultural fieldtrips, which is why we chose the the model of Deardorff (2006) as foundation for our work. Nevertheless, cross references to the model of Hammer et al. (2003) opened up fertile insights during data analysis and shall not be disregarded.

Methodology

Fieldwork Design

In order to evaluate the effects of multicultural group work on student teachers, we designed a 7-day field excursion to the surroundings of Kayseri, Turkey, named "Learning Intercultural Competence by Multicultural Excursions" (LINC ME). Eight students of Geography and Education [1] from each country (i.e., Germany and Turkey) participated in this course

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concerned with Education for Sustainable Development. Using self-regulated learning methods, the 16 students were challenged to evaluate the sustainable development of tourism in the area of Kayseri (Mount Erciyes Ski Center & Sultan Marshes Wetlands) and Cappadocia (Göreme & Ürgüp). While working in small intercultural groups in the field, students were required to engage in active learning activities and reflect on their experiences, mindsets and intercultural frameworks in regular evaluation meetings. Educational framework for this fieldwork was the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). According to the UNESCO's Road Plan, we implemented the four dimensions of ESD into the programme: Based on appropriate (1) *learning content* (sustainable development of tourism in Cappadocia) we designed (2) *interactive and learner-centred learning environments* (explained below) in order to promote *(3) collaborative decision-making competencies as well as critical and systemic thinking skills* thus empowering students to be *(4) global citizens* (UNESCO, p. 12).

Most of the students were undergraduates, some postgraduates, and all students participated in this fieldwork and research voluntarily. Some of those students were assigned a grade, others were not which was inevitable and due to different programs of study. The fieldwork could be integrated into the regular curriculum of all students (year 1 to year 4). We believe that intercultural learning is a key competence for all future Geography teachers to interact in multicultural classroom settings. This field excursion was part of a collaboration by Erciyes University, Kayseri (Turkey) and the University of Münster, Münster (Germany), established in 2012 with regard to international fieldwork. The project was organized and run by four academic staff, ranging from full professor to PhD student in the field of Geography Education. After having designed and tested the fieldwork, it can be run by 2 academic staff in the future.

Prior to the excursion, we collaboratively developed a fieldwork design framework, based on the principles of active teaching and intercultural learning tasks. Accordingly, all activities were conducted in small groups consisting of 2 German and 2 Turkish students. Field activities included guided walks, as well as interviews with locals, tourists, tourist operators, entrepreneurs, and local authorities, in order to obtain multiple perspectives on the issue. With a focus on ESD we analyzed the sustainable development of a ski center at Erciyes Mountain, discussed its ecological and hydrological impact on the Sultan Mashes wetlands with residents and local farmers and evaluated the interrelation of landscape and tourism in the Cappadocia region. As these sites were familiar to the Turkish students, but foreign to the German, both sides were supposed to gain diverse perspectives on the locations by discussing and working in intercultural teams. At the end of each day, the students were asked to reflect on their own learning and to evaluate observed learning processes in multicultural groups. Additionally, on the third and on the last day of the excursion, we asked them to summarize their findings in a poster. This was conducted through two separate processing steps. Firstly, we split the group according to their nationalities and asked them to create a poster containing the essential findings of the excursion so far. Secondly, we organized the students into multicultural groups and asked them to combine their posters. Not only did this challenge students to bring together different perspectives on what they had seen and experienced, but also to cope with intercultural differences, diverse perceptions, and foreign ways of communication and discussion. Following this two-step activity, we then conducted problem-centred qualitative interviews as described by Witzel (2000) with all participants in groups of two students, in order to gather feedback on the effects of multicultural fieldwork, as well as their feelings and behavior in the culturally homogeneous or heterogeneous groups: Students were asked about how they experienced group work, what barriers or limitations they encountered, how the excursion could be improved in the future and what they learned from this experience regarding their future teaching profession. The

interview guidelines were designed collaboratively by all academic staff following the SPSS-methods of Helfferich (2005).

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to avoid a potential loss of information due to language barriers, the qualitative interviews were conducted in the students' native languages. The transcripts were then translated into adequate English to enable comprehension of all interviews for German and Turkish academic staff. Moreover, all personal identifying information of the interviewee was removed, and the transcripts were anonymized to ensure data security and ethical concerns (Thomson, Bzdel, Golden-Biddle, Reay & Estabrooks, 2005). At this point, we were aware of the fact that at least a minimal loss of original phrasing and meaning would be inevitable owing to the nature of translation.

Based on inductive category development as a technique of qualitative content analysis by Mayring (2000), we subsequently analyzed the interview data to construct categories, which were collaboratively revised and improved by both Turkish and German staff throughout the coding process. According to the principles of qualitative research, we then reapplied the code system to all data in order to systemize our findings (Mayring, 2000). Finally, we analyzed the consistency of the extracted categories with the findings of the poster analysis, with the aim of setting up guidelines and recommendations for future multicultural field work. Up to now a corresponding fieldwork with Turkish and German students in Germany could not be conducted due to funding reasons exacerbated by disequilibrium of price levels in Turkey and Germany. However we strive for several replications of this fieldwork with multiple cohorts to retest our findings.

Findings

As stated earlier, the overall aim of this study is to point out the potential effects of multicultural fieldwork on student teachers' intercultural competence. To give a structured overview of the range of effects, the statements drawn from the interviews of the LINC ME-project are summarized and presented here according to the structure of the code system. Quotes from German students[ii] are indicated by (G); statements from Turkish students are indicated by (T). The subheadings depict the category system extracted from the coding process.

Socialization by Education System

Throughout all interviews, students stated that they became aware of their different educational socialization during the fieldwork. This included diverse strategies to accomplish tasks given by the instructors, as well as differences in mindsets due to different forms of educational socialization. Furthermore, differences in Germany's and Turkey's education systems were accounted for by the different learning strategies applied in each country. German curricula and final exams are entirely based on acquiring and applying competencies (DGfG, 2014). Whereas Turkish curricula favor a constructivist learning approach, centralized final exams still only test reproduction of content. This might account for Germans tackling a problem in a systemic way, whereas Turkish focus on the content.

When composing the posters, all students agreed that the Germans chose a more systemic approach, focusing on a systemic overview of essential content and its correlations. The Turkish, on the other hand, created graphical representations of their findings, working in

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a more visually aesthetic way. Whereas the Germans focused on single, in-depth aspects, the Turkish were more inclined to give an overview of the subject area entirely (see Figure 3and Figure 4). Although both groups were given the same task (to evaluate the sustainability of Mount Erciyes Ski Centre and summarize their findings on posters) they accomplished it differently due to their educational socialization: German students based their evaluation on a systemic connection of all dimensions of the triangle of sustainability (as first mentioned by the Brundtland Report, 1987)[iii]. The Turkish however designed their poster referring to their future target groups of primary school students and drew a picture.

The following statement from a Turkish student illustrates this point:

"We can see the education systems reflected here. They [Germans] think from multiple perspectives; in our [Turkish] posters, however, priority was given to visuality, whereas they [Germans] worked with the logic of ecosystems"(T).

Another Turkish student suggests reasons for the focus of the Turkish: "they [Germans] are working systematically; since our students will be 10 to 12 years of age, we assign more importance to visuality" (T). At this point, different approaches to teaching in school become discernible between the two countries.

The German students agreed that they are trained at both school and university to tackle tasks in a prosaic and systemic way, while the Turkish students appear to approach the same tasks in a more personal way:

"I think that we are trained in our university courses to grasp issues, to think beyond them and suggest solutions – this is also what we will demand of our students later on. That's why we automatically start to observe and analyze an issue. […] The approaches were very different: Turkish students gave more of an evaluation, a comment or even an individual opinion. We, however, did an analysis of what we had seen and heard."(G)

To conclude, we observed that the student teachers were aware of the basic differences in the different countries' education systems and were able to relate it to the other group's practical behavior. The effect of wonderment might have even triggered reflection processes, as a German student states: "This surprising result of their posters is something I'd rather remember than the occasional language barrier"(G). Based on these findings we suggest the following courses of action: Students should be encouraged to (1) reflect on different approaches in small culturally homogeneous groups, (2) then unite their posters in culturally heterogeneous groups with regard to intercultural awareness and tolerance and (3) reflect on the learning process on a meta-level and evaluate their work.

Teaching Methods to Promote Intercultural Competence

Learning in small intercultural groups
All things considered, learning in small intercultural groups was rated very positively by all participants. The German students in particular pointed out how Turkish students facilitated the access to local people, thereby allowing the Germans to gain a deeper understanding and deeper insights into the local population's points of view: "To get in touch with the local people here with the help of Turkish students and their interpreting is a great and unique opportunity. Without them, we would miss out on so much."(G) Likewise, Turkish students stated that "the group works we performed together were more productive, because the German students could see the events [i.e. the effects of agriculture in Sultan Marshes Wetlands on tourism and ecosystem] from a different perspective"(T). This made all students reflect on their perspectives within the group, and as a consequence "something new emerged"(T).

To summarize, these statements indicate that small multicultural groups are very fertile for fostering intercultural competence, as they enable access to different perspectives on e.g.

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the Erciyes ski center or the situation at Sultan Marshes wetlands and also allow for reflection on these points of view among the group members. Subsequently, more sophisticated perspectives were developed from the synthesis of diverse points of views, which would ultimately promote intercultural learning in a way that would be impossible in culturally homogeneous groups.

Discussions within multicultural groups
While the concept of working in multicultural groups was evaluated quite positively by all participants, multicultural discussions, on the other hand, turned out to be a challenge for everyone. Due to language barriers, the discussions often remained rather superficial, according to the German students. From their point of view, Turkish students were lacking goal orientation and time management. When they tried to push the Turkish to get their work done, "the Turkish replied something like 'well, it just takes time'" (G). Here, the Germans' strict determination to complete their work quickly and efficiently collided with the Turkish students' more nonchalant attitude of just taking as much time as the task needed. As a result, the Germans started a "negotiation of perspectives" (G) and insisted on engaging everyone in a debate. This eagerness to proselytize their fellow students was indicated by almost every German student, whereas the Turkish students never voiced any similar concerns. Similar differences in cultural socialization of culturally mixed groups were reported by Volet and Ang (1998): In their study 40 Australian and Asian students assessed their work in multicultural groups. Some students argued that Asians worked more collaboratively as collectiveness is deeply rooted in Asian culture, whereas "Caucasians" (in this case Australians) divided up their work (Volet & Ang, 1998, p. 11). They further report differences in some students' focus on "speaking only" whereas others take "action" (p.14).

Though the German students stated that discussions in multicultural groups were less fertile with regard to content, they nevertheless found it very profitable to foster intercultural competence. All things above considered, they declared the work achieved in multicultural groups to be "enriching and obstructive at the same time"(G); enriching in terms of opening up towards different perspectives and obstructive with regard to language barriers.

Nevertheless, we recommend to occasionally split the group into cultural homogeneous groups in order to gradually lead them to intercultural competence. If discussions only take place in culturally heterogeneous groups, extensive intercultural competence is necessary and could overburden students with little intercultural experience.

Benefits for Intercultural Learning

Overcoming prejudices
Working in multicultural groups is bound to raise the issue of prejudices based on one's nationality. These preconceptions were expressed by both the Germans and the Turkish, but in quite different ways. Whereas German students mostly reported insecurities as to whether they could talk to the Turkish about religion and religious practices (for example, their headscarves), Turkish students gave precise examples of overcoming prejudices. Several Turkish students had previously thought, "Germans were colder. I was expecting them to talk less, to put more distance between them and us. I was not expecting to meet with such open and charming Germans."(T) Similar statements were given by German students; obviously neither group of students had expected the other group to be so receptive and warm.

Other Turkish students referred to earlier encounters with Germans and drew comparisons: "When I was living in Germany, there was racism in my class. Here I saw for the first time that we were so tolerant towards each other."(T) One Turkish student stated that

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they "realized that we can make a friend without distinguishing according to religion, just considering a person as a human being."

This statement shows not only tolerance but also the first indication of intercultural competence (according to Bennett, 2004) by reflection on prior and current experiences and is therefore one of the most valuable outcomes of a multicultural student project. Multicultural field excursions are indeed suited to foster intercultural learning, provided that they involve active learning and close interactions in small groups.

Intercultural challenges
Although the processes of intercultural communication were assessed positively by all students, they also had to face some challenges.

The German students were aware of themselves as very direct and straightforward, whereas they viewed the Turkish as very considerate and contained by contrast. Although German students acknowledged that this behavior was rooted in different cultural frameworks, they did not apprehend the consequences of it. As they were still using their own German culture as a fundamental reference, they insisted on the Turkish students giving feedback more directly – which was actually the German way. Neither did they realize the Turkish way of giving feedback as a consequence of another cultural framework nor did they tolerate it. So the German students' understanding of cultural differences was limited to theory and did not change the way they interacted with the Turkish students.

The Turkish also reported quite inquisitive behavior on behalf of the Germans:

"They asked very different questions. For example, how do you treat a divorced girl, do you respect her or consider her as dirty? Why does nobody act when exposed to violence?"(T) Another student added that "they [Germans] are approaching more inquisitively, more critically. We cannot be so inquisitive and critical"(T) Insisting on an answer and not letting it go is a German behavior we also experience in our seminars on campus. While this is regarded as beneficial in terms of developing critical thinking skills, it might have been an obstructive (cultural) behavioral pattern in intercultural settings like this one.

This lack of understanding of each other brought forth a rather arrogant attitude in some students. One German student assessed the Turkish students to be less competent with regard to geographical knowledge and systemic understanding. Another German student even claimed that Germans were more experienced in intercultural competence.

In contrast to these feelings of superiority, the Turkish students expressed astonishment at some German habits: "In particular, when we invited them to our homes, they thought about how to pay it back."(T) For the German group, it was hard to receive something without having the opportunity to give something in return.

Another controversial issue was the matter of motivation and interest. Before the field excursion, German students had been asked to come up with a research question they were interested in, to do some simple research (e.g., interviews) during the excursion, and to present their findings to the class after the trip. The Turkish students were sure that "if they hadn't had any assignment, if they had only come to see Kayseri, would they have taken notes or have asked questions so enthusiastically? No."(T) Another student added: "We neither had assignments nor grade concerns, thus we were very relaxed."(T)

The German students, on the other hand, wondered why the Turkish asked so few questions, and attributed this to a lack of interest and motivation: "I'm not sure whether they are actually interested in the subject and really want to look into it. It would be nice if they interrelated things."(G) According to the German students, the Turkish students didn't show (enough) critical thinking during the tasks; which was why no proper discussion had come up.

As a result, the Germans started to intervene in the Turkish students' behavior, as they tried to spur them to discussion:

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"I think that it's a matter of motivation. They think like 'okay, we've done something. If we keep on discussing, we'll have to work more'. I feel like we have to look after them and make sure we get our work done. Also, this is a great opportunity for many of us and we want to use it, so many of us ask a lot of questions. The Turkish rarely ask anything."(G)

Another student specified: "While working in groups, we [Germans] often have to take the lead and guide the Turkish to critical thinking."(G)

It is obvious that the issue of asking questions was a source of cultural misinterpretation of both student groups: The Turkish students attributed the German eagerness to ask questions to their research assignment, even though the Germans asked questions in all kinds of situations and concerning topics that were not related to their research questions. The German students assessed the fact that the Turkish students did not ask many questions as lack of interest in the topics of the fieldwork or even the Germans themselves.

However, these conflicting cultural situations sparked intriguing processes of self-reflection with a German student on their German habits: "It's a clash of very different worlds. […] We Germans tend to over-scrutinize. The Turkish didn't do that at all. This was quite interesting."(G)

First steps towards a change of perspective

As stated above, Germans became self-aware of their attitudes of scrutinizing and criticizing everything. Over the course of the excursion, they eventually stated doubts about their own behavior and began to reflect on it:

"Just now, when we presented our critical poster, I was thinking that we expressed a lot of negative facts and we kind of slated the whole prestigious project of this region. After our presentation there was silence. And I thought: oh, wasn't that a bit too harsh? Damn it, we just criticized too much!"(G)

Triggered by this realization, some German students slowly began to abandon their "black and white" thinking:

"I think that in the beginning we were taken by surprise by the huge differences between us students. It's important to be aware of these differences, as this would otherwise result in black and white thinking. And this is something we can learn from this project, to think about what we can adopt from other people's perspectives without having to abandon one's own point of view." (G)

The Turkish students, on the other hand, also experienced differences that sparked self-reflection. This process started with comparisons of different attitudes and behavior. As one student said, "[the Turkish] approach is definitely more traditional. Our religion has also some impact on us. For example, they [the Germans] are more comfortable in the mixed groups of girls and boys."(T) Another student added that "our religious and political characteristics are inevitably reflected in our thoughts and lifestyle. I think they [the Germans] think more freely."(T)

From the awareness of their differences, students tried to comprehend things from the other group's point of view:

"We acquired new ideas, for example, to be honest, we were assessing the works performed in Erciyes from an economical point of view. Personally, I did not think at all about its ecological aspects. They [the Germans] were assessing the project [i.e. Erciyes Mountain ski center] from an ecological, a social, and an environmental point of view"(T).

Hence the students became aware of their subjective limitations: "since we live in it [their culture], many things have become natural and ordinary for us. However, since they're [the Germans] looking from the outside, they have a more critical view; they can see positive and negative parts better."(T)

Furthermore, Turkish students "realized that we have to change our perspective. We are aware that we need research and we also realized that we have to improve our questioning skills."(T)

These reflections finally gave rise to students rethinking their own values and attitudes. This development was reported by one student as follows:

"First of all, working with a group of strangers is tremendously enjoyable. Their reactions are different, their perceptions of events are different, and they can bring very outrageous things to your mind. In that sense, they also caused to question myself."(T) Another student added: "First of all I have to solve my language issue; in addition, I have to improve myself in a way that I will be able to think from different points of view."(T).

To sum up, all students agreed that they gained insight on different perspectives and approaches, and that they expanded their cultural horizons. This attests that working in multicultural groups provides valuable benefits on a personal level. When it comes to the merits of group work, however, the process of intercultural learning sometimes interfered with the learning of content. Although the concept of gaining diverse perspectives was evaluated very positively, these different points of view were often expressed on different levels of abstraction (concrete examples vs. meta-level consideration), which challenged students to bring these levels together in the end. Students declared that field excursions like this one were less suitable to goal-orientated work (i.e., that which involves scientific content), but more suitable to work in a multi-perspective and holistic way. One German student summed it up: "I think that what will stick in my mind is to be open towards different perspectives and to what is important to other cultures. That's the most important thing."(G)

A change of perspective is a process that requires time, and it cannot be achieved in a one-week trip. Nevertheless, the awareness of different perspectives, and the ability to attribute behavior and thinking patterns to a certain (cultural) mindset, are the basic competencies upon which intercultural learning can build.

Benefits for Students' future Teaching Profession

As all participating students were enrolled in Educational Studies, occasionally they drew conclusions with regard to their future work as teachers. None of the students spoke all three languages (English, German, and Turkish), so every student experienced once in a while what it was like not to be able to understand what other students were talking about. This made them realize what it must be like for students of primary and secondary education whose language proficiency is not sufficient to follow discourse in class. Moreover, the students reflected on the importance of differentiated instruction in class, and the differences highlighted in certain student compositions during group work sessions. "We experienced heterogeneity ourselves"(G), as one student put it. These experiences made the students consider the consequences for their own teaching practice, that is, how they could and might deal with language barriers, heterogeneity, and differentiated instruction. This attitude can be perceived as a first step towards an understanding of student diversity as claimed by Yang and Montgomery (2013).

Discussion

Based on their study on intercultural learning processes in culturally mixed groups Volet and Ang (1998) extracted four reasons why students preferred to work in culturally homogeneous groups: cultural-emotional connectedness, language, pragmatism and negative stereotypes. In

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our study, we could detect some indications of cultural-emotional connectedness as described by Volet and Ang (1998, p. 10) as "thinking along the same wavelength, and sharing a similar communication style". However, participants of the LINC ME study evaluated differences in wavelengths and communication style as enriching. The same effect applies for language barriers, as explained below. This could be rooted in the fact that our students spend 7 days in a row together in which they engaged in intensive collaborative fieldwork during the day and invited each other to their homes for dinner in the evening (the German students stayed in a youth hostel during the excursion). Participants of the study of Volet and Ang (1998) however only worked on-campus and reported difficulties to get to know each other. This indicates that multicultural group work on fieldtrips results in a more positive assessment of intercultural barriers than on-campus work, due to more opportunities to get to know each other and bond. Moreover, German students did not mention that Turkish students might not be as engaged due to private commitments (pragmatism), as indicated in the study by Volet and Ang (1998). German students were rather included in the Turkish students' private life and evening activities. Stereotypes were also expressed by both groups, but in the sense that students realized them and overcame prejudices.

We therefore postulate that multicultural field trips seem to be more profitable in terms of intercultural learning processes than culturally mixed on-campus work.

Motivation to Overcome Language Barriers

Turkish students in particular have realized their shortcomings regarding language, as well as the fact that it holds them back from intercultural communication. The LINC ME project has increased their motivation to improve their foreign language skills, in order to enable themselves to participate more actively in intercultural learning environments. Experiencing a language barrier therefore triggered engagement and interest in intercultural learning. We believe that this kind of multicultural fieldwork contributes to people's perceptions of multiculturalism as richness, instead of as an element of differentiation and separation.

Students' Cognitions Regarding Their Future Teaching Activity

As stated above, German students worked largely in a systemic way, whereas Turkish students focused on visuality. Although students were aware of these different approaches, they did not comprehend the synergistic effects that accompanied them. Both groups were instructed to unite their posters, which caused great difficulties and a fight for the "right" solution, rather than a unification of the two drafts. Similar struggles have been reported by Watson et al. (2008). A combination of visual elements and systemic structure would have resulted in major synergistic effects for all parties. Here, a more targeted intervention by teachers and more intensive reflection sessions seem to be required. For future fieldwork we would recommend to precisely determine the target group for the poster in the assignment. However, students did develop an understanding of different cultural mindsets and the underlying cultural socialization, reflected upon it, and integrated it into their own mindset. This is consistent with the finding by Cushner (2007, p.31), that "[teacher] students learn a significant amount about themselves as well as others, primarily by making the effort to understand another's point of view" in an overseas learning setting. They reconsider their stereotypes as well as elements of their own culture, which is of great value for their prospective profession as teachers (Cushner, 2007). Through this awareness, students of the LINC ME project furthermore realized their responsibility, as future teachers, to provide diverse learning environments in their class and to impart differentiated instruction.

Progress in Intercultural Competence

It must be understood that multicultural field excursions such as this project are less suited to engagement with in-depth scientific content, but instead focus on intercultural learning processes within the group. The learning of content does take place, but in a relatively indirect way: Without the Turkish group to interpret the language, and without their cultural knowledge about how to approach and talk to locals, the German group would not have been able to access to these people's opinions and experiences and therefore would have missed important information on the topic. By the same token, the Turkish group profited from the Germans' unbiased views of places, situations, and circumstances that were too common for Turkish students to question. Both groups participated in this fieldwork in the same way containing the same tasks, but gained valuable insights by discussing their experiences and findings in culturally heterogeneous groups.

Previous studies have shown that multicultural fieldwork facilitates intercultural learning processes, given that students are assigned concise tasks and attend regular reflective-discussion meetings (Schrüfer, 2011). Experience drawn from the LINC ME project confirms that targeted reflection sessions, in both culturally homogeneous and multicultural groups, are essential in enabling students to assess behavior beyond their own cultural standards.

To summarize, we found that students improved their intercultural competence in this teaching setting. Nevertheless, during this project, students did not manage to correlate different behavior with differing cultural frameworks in concrete practical situations. This shows that while students comprehended the basics of intercultural communication on a theoretical level, they were not yet able to put this knowledge into practice. The fact that Germans verbalized these concepts in the interviews, but acted as if they wanted to force their way of working on the Turkish, is just one example that illustrates this point. Although theoretically they were aware of how one should act in intercultural settings, they did not realize that cultural differences also comprise different learning strategies and working styles, and thus should be treated with the same tolerance.

Referring to Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence, these findings indicate that this multicultural fieldwork did have an impact on students' intercultural learning process, with respect to *Attitudes*, *Skills & Knowledge*, and *Comprehension* (see Figure 1). With regard to *Attitudes*, students showed much respect for each other; they were open and curious, but still judgmental towards each other, and did not reach the level of "tolerance of ambiguity". Furthermore, this multicultural fieldwork triggered awareness and reflection processes of the students' own cultures, and of the search for cultural contexts and world views, which is an important part of gaining *Knowledge*. Although students still passed judgment on the other group's behavior, one of the unique effects of this project was that it stimulated cultural discussions within the intercultural group. Thus the students, through participating in this project, practiced essential skills of listening, observing, and analyzing cultural issues. Due to the short duration of this project, the internal outcome as defined by Deardorff was shown by some students' *Adaptability* and *Flexibility*, but neither to the extent of ethnorelative views nor of external outcomes.

According to Deardorff (2006), the degree to which each component is achieved is a determinant for intercultural competence. During this 7-day multicultural fieldwork excursion, teachers observed, in the interval between the two dates of the interviews, an improvement in intercultural competence on a personal level, as defined by the components mentioned above. This demonstrates that short multicultural field work like the LINC ME project is a rewarding instruction method to foster university students' intercultural

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competence on a personal level, as described by Deardorff (2006). These critical experiences must be followed by further instruction in intercultural learning settings, in order to eventually reach internal and external outcomes on both an interpersonal and an interactive level. Taking into account Bennett's (2004) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS, see Figure 2) the findings suggest connections to various levels of ethnocentrism as defined by Bennett. It must be stated clearly that this study did not intentionally aim to relate data given by student interviews to Bennett's model; neither is the design of this study suitable to answer this question. However, we detected interrelations of students' answers to the model mentioned above, which we do not want to discount: as stated above, the German students expressed a feeling of superiority towards the Turkish students, as is characteristic for the level of *Defense*. On top of that, almost all participating students agreed that the Germans were very critical, which is also defined as one element of the *Defense* phase. Moreover, some students strongly emphasized similarities between the two culturally diverse groups, which indicated the stage of *Minimization*. It should also be mentioned that the Turkish students in particular seemed to accept the Germans' culture, albeit not entirely sympathetic to it.. To analyze students' intercultural competence according to the DMIS, future studies with respective research designs must be conducted. Earlier studies have also shown that intercultural learning continues even some time after a fieldtrip (Schrüfer, 2011), which was not taken into account by this study as it focused on intercultural learning *during* fieldwork.

Conclusions

In this study, it was not our intention to compare the Turkish and German student concerning their nationality, but to analyze heterogeneity of the whole group of all students. However, differences became evident between the German and Turkish groups due to a) differences in educational socialization and b) different foci of content reproduction (Turkish students) on the one hand and critical thinking (German students) on the other hand. However, the students realized those differences and made an effort to understand different perspectives. In contracts to prior studies (Volet & Ang, 1998) students of the LINC ME study reconsidered and finally overcame some of their prejudices, which could be due to the great amount of working and private time they spent together giving them the opportunity to really getting to know each other. Benefits from mixed groups outweighed barriers and challenges and triggered reflection of one's own and different cultural perspectives – a key competence for their prospective profession as teachers of Geography (Cushner, 2007). Generally, experience drawn from this project underlines the importance of regular reflection meetings for intercultural learning.

Furthermore, our findings showed that fieldwork in multicultural groups triggers intercultural learning processes on a *personal level*, as postulated by Deardorff (2004). It was observed that student teachers of the LINC ME project showed *Openness*, *Respect,* and *Curiosity* (see Figure 1) towards their peers; they became aware of their own cultural frameworks and contexts, and observed, analyzed, and related differing thinking patterns and/or behavior to different cultural standards. Based on those findings, we suggest the following guidelines for facilitators to engage students in ESD and to foster their intercultural competence:

(1) Remix groups for reflection meetings: In order to reflect diverse perspectives and behavior among participants (e.g. how to create a poster) students should be given enough time and opportunity to apply their conclusions. We recommend intensive reflection in culturally homogeneous and culturally heterogeneous groups combined

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with assignments that challenge students to put their insights into practice. Regular reflection meetings should include reflection on feedback culture, cultural frameworks, and internal and external actions as well as their consequences for teaching.

(2) Promote collaborative problem solving: The task to collaboratively combine the posters of the two groups was found to be a challenge, but it also triggered reflection processes as well as discussions on problem solving strategies, which confirms previous studies (Cushner, 2007).

(3) Offering constructivist learning settings and inquiry-based learning: German students were asked to design a personal research question in the forefront of the fieldwork. This turned out to set a very productive learning environment for the students and fostered their motivation and engagement. However, these individual research tasks should be assigned to both groups of students in future fieldwork.

However, findings indicate that student teachers' intercultural competence seems to be basically limited to levels of ethnocentrism as defined by Bennett (2004), presumably due to the short duration of the program. In the course of the fieldwork, students eventually began to perceive and assess different values. These reflection processes indicated a development towards basic levels of ethno-relativism, which should be intensified by further multicultural fieldwork courses.

To uphold this intercultural learning process, we believe that similar learning settings are very beneficial for student teachers of geography to be able to develop intercultural competence on an interpersonal level. We are convinced that student teachers' experience of learning in multicultural groups is a key element for them to implement culturally differentiated instruction in their future geography classrooms and therefore pay tribute to heterogeneity. In order to facilitate intercultural learning processes in secondary schools, the teachers have to gain multicultural competencies in the first place. This is why we claim that multicultural learning environments like the suggested fieldtrip should be an integral part in the higher education of prospective Geography teachers. Furthermore, we regard them as very profitable for all those teaching geography in higher education.

We are certain that multicultural fieldwork as an integral part of student teacher education in Geography has the power to equip our future teachers with the intercultural competence necessary for teaching in a diverse and tolerant Europe.

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3   **APPENDIX**
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6   **Figure 1.** Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff 2006)
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8   **Figure 2.** Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity based on the model of Bennett
9   (2004), adapted from Schrüfer (2011)
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11   **Figure 3.** Poster of German students
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13   **Figure 4.** Poster of Turkish students
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17   **Notes**
18   _____
19   [i] Most of those students aim to become teachers for primary or secondary schools. However, study programs in
20   Germany and Turkey still leave a definite decision open until their bachelor graduation.
21   [ii] In this paper the terms „German students" and „Turkish students" only refer to the participants of this study,
22   not to German or Turkish students in general.
23   [iii] Both groups were familiar with the triangle of sustainability, as it is an important part of the curricula.
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DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:
Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:
Informed frame of reference/filter shift:
Adaptability (to different communication styles & behaviors; adjustment to new cultural environments);
Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);
Ethnorelative view;
Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:
Cultural self-awareness;
Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role and impact of culture & others' world views);
Culture-specific information;
Sociolinguistic awareness

Skills:
To listen, observe, and interpret
To analyze, evaluate, and relate

Requisite Attitudes:
Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)
Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment)
Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

- *Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)*
- *Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements*
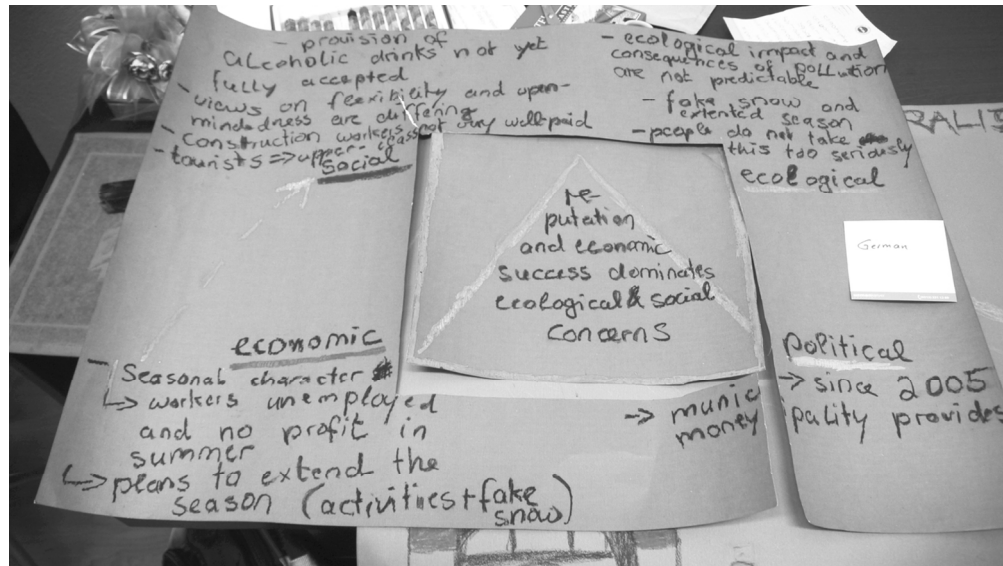
Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff 2006)
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Ethnocentrism			Ethnorelativism		
Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaption	Integration
Unable to perceive cultural differences, no interest in different cultures or people	Recognition of cultural differences, assessing one culture as being either superior or inferior to one's own	Recognition of cultural differences but still believing in basic universal values	Appreciation of cultural differences in terms of values and behavior	Able to adapt to different values and behavior	Integration of multiple cultures, identity is not rooted in one culture

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Bennett (2004) adapted by Schrüfer (2009)
46x19mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Poster of German students
118x66mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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Poster of Turkish students
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