

A Comprehensive Analysis of the Views of Turkish Teachers on the Process of Intercultural Education

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ABSTRACT This study aims to analyse views of 10 teachers at selected private and national high schools in Turkey regarding an international project to develop intercultural sensitivity. Throughout the project, seminars and workshops by academic experts were prepared for the teachers concerning; intercultural awareness, culture and education, student-centred learning methods, learning styles, multiple intelligence theory, empathy, and teacher research. With the guidance of academics, teachers developed lesson plans, applied these to their classes, presented the results at national and international meetings in which they met their colleagues from other countries and wrote articles about the process. While teachers were anxious about working with people from different countries and applying new methods at first, they later realized that achieved fruitful results. Moreover, they stated that intercultural awareness should be incorporated into all classes. They emphasized, however, that to be successful in such projects, teachers need fluency in English and a willingness to try new methods.

INTRODUCTION

In our changing world, the production of knowledge is growing due to a growing global population. This reduces distances between countries and cultures, brings people closer and makes cultures more easily shared. In the current era of so-called globalization, knowing other cultures, knowing each other and being able to communicate in a multicultural world is vital for prosperity and peace. In this context, intercultural studies gain importance since individuals must be well prepared for a multicultural world. From this point of view, both in the business and educational world, there is an increasing importance attached to the intercultural identity of individuals. According to Bhawuk and Brislin (1992), interacting with other cultures is necessary if one is to be effective in a different culture; one must be sensitive so as to understand those from other cultures, and be ready to modify their attitude towards those cultures that are not well-respected including the people of those cultures. The most appropriate concept

that summarizes these ideas is 'intercultural sensitivity'. Intercultural sensitivity can be described as the experience and awareness towards cultural differences (Hammer 2003; Ghosh and Galczynski 2014; O'Grady 2014). Chen and Starosta (1996) define intercultural sensitivity as possessing self-awareness, open-mindedness, and social convenience. According to literature, these three characteristics enable individuals to show the required sensitivity in accepting cultural differences during intercultural interaction and respecting these differences. According to Fantini (1995), an individual possessing cultural sensitivity is able both enhance his understanding of his own culture and of other cultures and to develop empathy in his/her own context. In order to successfully keep up with the world, successfully, an individual should develop sensitivity to different cultures as well as to his/her own culture. Parekh (2002) states that individuals who possess intercultural sensitivity have a multiple perspective by noting other cultures, besides their own culture. In this respect, intercultural sensitivity has the mission of bridging the gaps between different cultures, different perspectives, and backgrounds.

From the educational point of view intercultural sensitivity is critical in the sense that every citizen has the right to have his rights protected and receive equal education (Banks 2004). Moreover, to avoid misjudgments, social characteristics of students, such as ethnic background, language, and socio-economic status should not

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be considered as a source of educational failure (Persell 2010) and teachers should welcome differences and plurality to effectively manage the classroom without any prejudice (Ming and Duke 2006). The perspective of the teacher is of vital importance as his active intervention can change the negative atmosphere and foster the anti-bias culture in the learning environment (Tarman and Tarman 2011). Intercultural sensitivity is mostly developed on condition that teachers, and students in return can develop a multi-faceted, global, historical, and cultural perspective regardless of judging people about their ethnicity. This kind of an effort results in gaining a broader view to survive in the diverse world and support of different kinds of ethnic groups (Ameny-Dixon 2004).

Learning about different cultures, respecting them, and getting across meanings by developing tolerance and empathy are among the goals of intercultural education (UNESCO 2006). Intercultural education is an approach to learning and teaching which is built on democratic values fostering plurality (Bennett 1995). According to Banks and Banks (2010), there are at least three dimensions of intercultural education; it is an idea, a movement, and a process. In the idea, it is defended that all students have equal rights at school regardless of gender, social class, ethnicity or cultural characteristics. The movement is reformist, which anticipates the change of educational institutions in order to enable all students to have equal rights in learning. Because of the fact that goals can never be achieved by all means, multicultural education is a process. Educational institutions are responsible for developing individuals in this way; helping individuals to harmonize with social and economic development by bringing them knowledge and values for new changes and developments (Erden 2008; Gollnick and Chinn 2012).

As with many other countries, the current educational objectives of Turkey include developing respect and sensitivity toward different cultures (MEB 2006). However, for individuals to share this objective, the concept of intercultural sensitivity must be integrated into teaching designs. Above all, the teacher who implements such an aim should possess adequate knowledge about the subject. According to Byram (1997), the following items must be considered in order to integrate intercultural sensitivity into education:

- *attitudes*: developing interest, openness and curiosity towards other cultures;
- *knowledge*: general learning about the social and individual practice and outputs about the home and the target countries;
- *interpreting and relating skills*: displaying the ability to comment on a text or event from another culture, and relating these with one's own culture;
- *discovery and interaction skills*: displaying the ability to acquire knowledge about a new culture, to simultaneously communicate in line with cultural practices, and to apply these attitudes, skills, and knowledge within the border of interaction;
- *critical cultural awareness/political education*: being aware of critical thinking, practices and outputs in the home and the target countries and cultures.

It is also essential that teacher education institutions prepare pre-service teachers for culturally diverse classrooms, where they will need to have a multicultural point of view. Most graduates have a common problem of having insufficient understanding or limited experience about handling with culturally diverse classrooms (Major 2012). If multicultural and diverse classroom models are to be improved, then teachers of these classrooms must have a culturally diverse understanding of tackling issues (Chou 2007). Gay (2010) argues that pre-service teachers need an equalitarian and confiding student-faculty relationship to improve their self-awareness about multiculturalism. There should be a strong bond between faculty and student teachers which is based on mutual respect and esteem.

Recently there have been numerous studies on developing the intercultural awareness of individuals in education. "Promote Education and Reciprocal Understanding through Multicultural Integrated Teaching, (PERMIT)" is among these, as a project, which aims to develop civil society dialogue between the European Union and Turkey. The PERMIT project was developed with the coordination of Yildiz Technical University, in partnership with the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) and Italian and Slovene Universities. The focus group of the project consists of subject teachers and their students in secondary schools. The main aims of the project were to:

1. Define intercultural communication competence;

2. Investigate evaluation systems;
3. Investigate teaching approaches based on multiple intelligence theory;
4. Help teachers develop their skills by supporting them in their bid to be innovative;
5. Enhance the quality of education within the existing framework of programmes; and
6. Raise teacher awareness regarding specific subjects that can be added to the existing programme, such as the history of interactions among civilizations, freedom of speech, human rights, gender equality, ethical attitudes, and environmental protection.

In the project, using Bennett's (1993) "Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)" as the basis, teachers received training on "concepts about subjects", "student-centred teaching methods and techniques", and "process evaluation" via online and workshop techniques. The teachers were able to prepare and apply lesson plans with the assistance of researchers, by means of both face-to-face and online communication. As Bennett (2014) stated, the establishment of a positive learning environment that supports interaction of the members of the learning community without prejudices was the main purpose of the project.

Over the course of this study, the views of the teachers from Turkey about the project process were investigated by considering various factors. In this regard, the aim of the study was that the results of the study will guide teachers and educational institutions in developing intercultural sensitivity via education. In this study, the following research question was scrutinized:

What are views of the participant teachers with respect to the intercultural sensitivity within the PERMIT project?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is a case study, and thus, a qualitative study. The case study seeks to understand the reactions of the individual student, the classroom or the institutional system within the framework of its natural environment (Jaeger 1988). In this case study, the "cases" are activities carried out during the PERMIT project. Unlike with quantitative studies, in qualitative studies the researcher is not only an exterior observer using specific methods, collecting data, and analysing them, but also someone who spends some time interviewing participants, and showing empathy for their experiences, forming a viewpoint that is used in analysing the data (Jaeger 1988; Glesne 2010).

Participants

The study group of the research was comprised of 10 teachers of various subjects at high schools in Istanbul, during the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 academic years. Information about the teachers is given in Table 1.

Project Process

During the project, teachers were trained in two phases; face-to-face and online.

Face-to-face Training

During this process, teachers were trained in both national and international meetings. The content of the meetings is given in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study group

	<i>School type</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Teaching experience</i>
Ece	Private	Female	Biology	5 years
Özlem	National	Female	History	10 years
Meral	National	Female	English	6 years
Gamze	National	Female	English	5 years
Gülcan	Private	Female	English	3 years
Dilek	National	Female	Biology	8 years
Hülya	National	Female	Drawing	25 years
Murat	National	Male	Physics	10 years
Fikret	National	Male	Physics	24 years
Mustafa	National	Male	Literature	5 years

Table 2: Information about the national and international meetings

<i>National meetings (One-day training sessions)</i>	<i>International meetings (Three-day training sessions)</i>
Place: Istanbul Date: 25.09.2008 * Presentation of the project, * Presentation of training platform on empathy and multiple intelligence theory,*Presentation of the platform. Place: Istanbul Date: 08.03.2009 * Evaluation of the first international meeting, * Training on constructive teaching method, * Seminar on culture and education. Place: Istanbul Date: 09.05.2009 * Feedback of teachers on the application of lesson plans in classes, * Presentation of non-governmental organizations: ACEV and TGEV. Place: Istanbul Date: 20.06.2009 * Presentation of a non-governmental organization: KDEV, * Teacher feedback on the project.	Place: Istanbul Date: 12-13-14.02.2009 * Conference on the concept “empathy”, * Conference on the application of “multiple intelligence theory” on education,* Presentation of teacher portfolios and how to fill them, * Training and workshop on learning plans. Place: Koper Date: 9-10-11.04.2009 * Presentation of studies on intercultural learning, * Presentation of the results of teacher and student questionnaires,*Presentation of lesson plans which were developed by teachers,*Presentation of the online learning environment for students. Place: Venice Date: 4-5-6.06.2009 * Presentation of teachers on the results of application of lesson plans in classes, * Seminar on the application of intercultural studies on education, * Informing teachers about the criteria of the articles that they were to develop.

Online Training

An online platform was developed to enable researchers, teachers and students to contact each other throughout the process. Articles on intercultural sensitivity and related topics were sent to the teachers through this platform with time periods allowed for reading and evaluating these articles; subsequently, feedback was provided by the researchers. The teachers also received support in order to develop lesson plans through this platform. Furthermore, in this online environment teachers helped each other by sharing with their colleagues and researchers their classroom experiences from the application process. The most important function of the online platform was to enable teachers who were from the same subject area, but of different countries of origin to communicate with each other and develop new lesson plans. In short, the online environment appeared to be the place where teachers could develop themselves, share their experiences and get rapid feedback.

Expected Outcomes/Products from Teachers

The teachers were expected to develop three lesson plans. Before the preparation of these

plans, they received various theoretical and practical trainings. In this context workshops at national and international meetings on the topics “What is intercultural sensitivity?” and “How can it be adapted to educational process?” were arranged. Later, student-centred instruction method and techniques were shown to teachers and sample lesson plans were presented to them for discussion. Meanwhile, “individual differences in learning” which are important for development of intercultural sensitivity were considered to some extent. Online articles on these topics were sent to teachers with a request for comments on the relevant application in their own courses along with feedback. Teachers from the same discipline worked together on the tasks. While communication was facilitated by computer, telephone, and in person, technology and group studies were taken into account in many parts of the process. Afterwards, teachers applied these lesson plans in their classes and presented the outcomes at national and international conferences. Finally, every teacher wrote a personal article about the results of the application of lesson plans, and the academics chose the ones that they liked the most to be published in the project booklet.

Collection and Analysis of Data

The data were collected using the focus group method, which is a qualitative method that aims to obtain information about the psychological and socio-cultural properties of the groups and sub-groups (who are only half-conscious or not conscious at all of these properties) and to learn about the behaviours and motivations behind them (Aksit 1992: 2). The focus group in this study was comprised of 10 teachers from Turkey who were asked open-ended questions about the project process in two interviews. The first one-hour long interviews were done after the teachers taught the lessons they prepared on their own. The second two-hour-long interviews were conducted after the teachers met their colleagues at the last international meeting. The rationale was to find out the views of the participant teachers with respect to the intercultural sensitivity within the PERMIT project. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim after words.

The thematic analysis technique was used for the analysis of the data. The data were divided into thematic sub-sets, and the teacher views that reflect these sub-sets were chosen from the whole data (Yildirim and Simsek 2006). For the analysis, for each teacher, the researcher read the transcripts from the first interview data and then the second interview data line-by-line looking for the statements/sentences corresponding to the intercultural sensitivity. This way the researcher was able to determine the common and/different statements/sentences from one interview

to the other. The researcher then examined the data from other interview data coming from each teacher in the same way. In this way, the researcher was able to obtain themes clustering around the same ideas from every participant teacher. Then, the researcher was also able to look for common ideas/statements within each theme, creating sub-sets.

RESULTS

The first problem of the study came with the question; "What are the basic aims of teachers in participating in the project?" In this context, teachers' views were grouped under three headings, using the thematic analysis method; "achieving familiarity with different cultures and people", "obtaining project experience", and "developing professional and language skills". The views of teachers are shown in Table 3.

The second problem came with the question; "What were the concerns of teachers in the project process?", where the teacher views were grouped under six headings by thematic analysis: "students", "language", "curriculum", "online communication", "time management", and "lesson planning". The views of teachers are shown in Table 4.

The third problem of the study was: "What contributed most to teacher success in the project?", where the views were grouped under four headings: "time management skills", "material development skills", "English-speaking skills", and "social skills". The views of teachers are shown in Table 5.

Table 3: Views of teachers on their basic aims in participating to the project

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Quotations from teacher views</i>
<i>Getting to Know Different Cultures and People</i>	☐ I wanted to learn about the cultural characteristics of different countries, and how these cultural differences are reflected in education. ☐ Getting to know different people and cultures has always been among my interests. ☐ I wanted to work with colleagues from different cultures who teach the same courses.
<i>Getting Project Experience</i>	☐ I haven't had a project study before and I wanted to have an experience like the ones (European Projects) I have heard about.
<i>Getting Professional Development</i>	☐ I want to write on my CV that I have worked on a European project. ☐ I believed that this kind of a project would enable me to become more complete in my profession. ☐ I knew that learning new educational concepts and applications would advance my professional skills. ☐ I knew that getting extensive training from experts would make a positive contribution to my professional development.

Table 4: Views of teachers on their worries throughout the project process

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Quotations from teacher views</i>
<i>Students</i>	☐ Students had difficulty in application because of inexperience. ☐ English became a problem for students in research and communication with the students from other countries.
<i>Language</i>	☐ Lack of motivation at the beginning of the project. ☐ Level of English for communication. ☐ Resources being in English.
<i>Curriculum</i>	☐ I believe that I cannot express myself in other languages. ☐ The topics we chose did not have a perfect match with the national curriculum. ☐ Difference between the methods offered in the project and the ones we had before led to problems in application.
<i>Online Communication</i>	☐ Many of the students did not have a computer at home. ☐ Level of English did not allow us to have sufficient communication with others.
<i>Time Management</i>	☐ Applying the developed learning units and the national curriculum caused problems related to timing. ☐ We were required to follow the same subjects with other classes in the same discipline in order to use shared exams. ☐ Student centred methods required more time than the traditional ones.

Table 5: Views of teachers on their personal skills at the project

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Quotations from teacher views</i>
<i>Time Management Skills</i>	☐ I was good at time management given that while we had our own duties, we had to work for the project at the same time. ☐ Contrary to my former beliefs, I realized that I was very good at time management.
<i>Material Development Skills</i>	☐ Developing materials in different areas enriched my learning environment. ☐ Materials that I used in the classroom attracted the attention of students and gave them encouragement in their studies.
<i>English Speaking Skills</i>	☐ I developed creative and original materials. ☐ My ability to speak English helped me a lot both in intercultural meetings and online environment. ☐ I believe that the first requirement for being successful in the project is speaking English. You can contact with people easily and advance rapidly.
<i>Social Skills</i>	☐ Due to my social skills, I was able to contact with people easily in all meetings, especially in national and international meetings.

The fourth problem was; “What are the benefits to teachers from the project?”, where the views were grouped under six headings; “observed positive behaviours of students”, “foreign-language skills”, “method and technique skills”, “intercultural awareness”, “willingness to learn”, and “evaluation method”. The teacher views are shown in Table 6.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the study can be interpreted within the framework of the study questions as follows: The aims of the teachers

participating in the project were: getting to know new cultures and people, acquiring project experience and professional development. Teachers who work at private or state schools want to participate in such projects not only because of the administrative support from their schools, but also because of the prestige of participating. In addition, it is normally difficult for Turkish teachers to go abroad because of financial and bureaucratic problems. Bureaucratic problems include difficulties in obtaining permission for leave from work and obtaining a visa. European projects provide teachers with the opportunity to see different places and meet different people.

Table 6: Views of teachers on the personal benefits from the project

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Quotations from teacher views</i>
<i>Observed Positive Behaviours of Students</i>	☐ Students who were timid in traditional methods became active when different techniques were used in the class. ☐ Students started to use computer more for learning purposes. ☐ Student motivation for the courses increased. ☐ Student prejudice regarding people in other countries decreased. ☐ Students expressed desire to learn different cultures increased. ☐ Students started to work much more sincerely and collectively in the group activities. ☐ Students can more readily see the importance of language proficiency now.
<i>Foreign Language Skills</i>	☐ I believe that my English writing and speaking skills have improved. ☐ Even though I am an English language teacher, I was timid to speak English, but my willingness to speak English increased with this project. ☐ I was not able to understand anything in English at the beginning of the project, but in the last meeting, I was able to understand the talks and ask questions.
<i>Method and Technique Skills</i>	☐ Before the project, I thought that student centred methods were hard to apply, but I realized that it was not the case. In my classes, I will use the new methods that I learned. ☐ Different methods and techniques seemed abstract to me before, but when I used these methods and saw the outcomes, I realized that they were so concrete (that is, collaborative learning).
<i>Intercultural Awareness</i>	☐ I started to look at people's lives in different cultures with more tolerance. ☐ I am able to look at other cultures with empathy and without prejudice.
<i>Willing to Learn</i>	☐ My desire to learn a foreign language increased and I will make a move towards doing just that. ☐ I want to learn more about cultures and I will follow related projects to do that. ☐ Particularly, I will seek out different methods and techniques which are applicable in classrooms.
<i>Evaluation Method</i>	☐ I want to enrol in graduate programs on intercultural studies. ☐ I learned the importance of observation and process evaluation in evaluating student skills. ☐ I saw the effect of getting students to reflect on new knowledge. I will use it in my classes.

Besides, participating in these projects is a privilege for teachers who want to transfer to the educational institutions involved where the probability of development increases with the level of professional knowledge and skills.

Teachers stated that one of their aims in participating was professional development. Since 2005 in Turkey, educational programmes of all courses have been modified by the National Ministry of Education, so that teacher-centred programmes are replaced with student-centred ones. In the light of this change, textbooks and workbooks are prepared and active learning methods are applied in classrooms instead of using the traditional ones. However, teachers are not given proper in-service training about the application process. In the European projects concerning teacher training, teachers are given

adequate training, which enables them to further develop further. As Ramsey (2015) implies, teachers have a crucial role in students' live and on condition that teachers adapt a culturally sensitive attitude and modern style of teaching, students will then learn how to behave in a diverse world consisting of different individuals.. When the objectives and strategies of the PERMIT project are examined, it can be easily seen that teachers prefer it because of its basic characteristics developing their competencies.

The concerns and anxieties of teachers about the project process were; lack of student skills, language problems (for teachers in public schools except the English-language teachers), adaptation problems between the project and the school curriculum, difficulties in online communication, a perceived inability to deal with the expectations

of the school, and having to prepare a new instructional unit. These concerns are to be expected from teachers participating in such a project for the first time. Their primary anxiety involved the language problem. Since all the materials used in the international meetings and online environment were in English, this is normal. In other words, the official language of the project was English. That is why teachers were required to know English in order to express themselves well and understand the activities. Thus, the concerns of teachers whose English proficiency was low was expected. Language, which has the power to affect learning positively, is a means of effective communication (Vygotsky 1978). When the speaker lacks the basic skills to communicate in the target language or he thinks that he cannot effectively express himself, it becomes a burden to sustain the task in spite of the fact that the participant is volunteer to take part in the activity (Saraswathi 2004).

The teachers stated that their strong points throughout the project were: time management, material development, speaking English (for teachers in private schools and the English-language teachers in public schools), and social skills. While teachers were engaged in the studies in the PERMIT project, they fulfilled their responsibilities at their own schools. Thus, they needed to have good time management to fulfil the requirements of both the project and their work. On the other hand, they were required to pay attention to the individual differences of students while preparing lesson plans. With this aim, they had to use different methods and techniques, and develop materials for student learning. It was observed that the teachers who had competency in material development were faster and more successful in preparing lesson plans and at implementation. Teachers who were good at social interaction were better at communication and getting help both in the online environment and at the international meetings. In the study conducted by Fretheim (2007) on the variables that affect the level of intercultural sensitivity, where the subjects were teachers and managers of an American school in South Africa; it was revealed that the intercultural sensitivity levels of participants who knew at least one foreign language were higher than those of other participants.

The teachers stated that by the end of the project, students had developed their skills for empathy and getting to know different cultures,

which is a result of working in an international communication-based project. Fantini (1995) notes that communicating with people from different cultures and working with them generates skills on getting to know ourselves and also having empathy for the other cultures. In the study done by Demir and Demir (2009), where they question the perception of Erasmus exchange programmes on students' cultural change, it was revealed that foreign experiences lead to an increase in tolerance toward different cultures and respect for universal values. In the study of Westrick and Yuen (2007), where they investigated intercultural sensitivity of teachers in a high school in Hong Kong, it was found that there was a positive correlation between the educational level and a period of living in different cultures with intercultural sensitivity. Similar results were also attained by Fretheim (2007). On the other hand the opinions of teachers and students regarding intercultural topics can be correlated with Bennet's "Acceptance of Cultural Differences" step in his Intercultural Sensitivity Model. According to the researcher individuals at this step see individuals from other cultures with a high level of cognition and without considering intercultural differences. Positive attitudes on the part of teachers help to create the generation of positive student attitudes (Philipou 1988, from Leung 2001). The training and sharing in the PERMIT project enabled teachers to have an empathetic point of view towards other cultures which also leads to a positive effect on their students. Jain (2013) conducted a study with the purpose of enhancing the intercultural sensitivity of teacher using cross-cultural movies and found out that there was a significant increase in participants' intercultural sensitivity levels.

According to another result obtained from the study, the teachers stated that their English-speaking skills improved over the course of the project. The opportunity to listen to conversations, reading in the online environment, and face-to-face interactions (including body language) may have contributed positively to their English skills. Also, the atmosphere motivated some timid teachers to do their best in speaking English. Responses to their talks may have also affected their motivation positively and contributed to their self-confidence. Dewey (1956) notes that social experience develops communication in society, enhances cognitive skills, brings a sense

of responsibility to engage in correct behaviour, and thus, regenerates language and conceptions. As Hunter et al. (2015) point out, social interaction is a part of inter-culturalization and it is of vital importance to have self-consciousness about internalizing social interaction to become engaged in communication both with students and teachers.

The teachers stated that student motivation increased during the work done on the project. In the teaching environments where intercultural aspects were integrated, students were able to study and actively participate in group discussions, as well as being asked to present the fruits of their labours to their friends. The opportunity for self-expression in such an environment might have a positive effect on student motivation regarding courses. Kim et al. (1999) note that student motivation increases as they learn in a co-operative environment, share their experiences with teachers and friends, and have discussions in the classroom. Another study from Caprio (from Hanley 1994) reveals that students who learn by student-centred designs join the classes willingly, take more responsibility regarding their education and have more self-confidence. Mahoney and Schamber (2004) investigated the effect of teaching program based on Bennett's Intercultural Sensitivity Development Model, on their intercultural sensitivity level where lectures were integrated with intercultural sensitivity. Results show that programs that aim to develop intercultural sensitivity should involve teaching methods at the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels in order to reach goals. Gonçalves (2011) investigated the effect of a project focusing on developing inter-cultural dialogue. She found out that sharing knowledge and ideas, and working under pleasant learning conditions, can help reduce inter-cultural prejudices, which, in turn, supports the inter-cultural sensitivity and competence.

The teachers stated that they learned different methods and techniques applicable in classrooms and saw that students became more active in practice through the project. This finding is important in terms of the PERMIT project. On the other hand, the teachers pointed out that they learned a new type of evaluation method in the PERMIT project. They also said that in the applications they saw the importance of students reflecting on their own development during evaluation which is another important finding of the

project. According to Byram (1997), instead of tests and traditional examinations, evaluations in which intercultural aspects are integrated, should be done by the portfolio approach which shows the development process of students. In other words, process evaluation is more important than product evaluation. Yurtseven and Altun (2015) also emphasized that implementation of multicultural concepts was an important prerequisite for teachers to come at an understanding and to establish a system maximizing the consideration of diverse cultural background, in the learning atmosphere.

Lastly, at the end of the PERMIT project, teachers stated that they were willing to learn new methods and techniques, getting to know about different cultures, learning foreign languages and studying intercultural subjects as graduate students. This desire to learn and develop can be considered one of the project's positive contributions to the teachers. As stated in many studies (Benedict 2014; Gokmen 2014; Grado 2014; Orlovsky 2014), creating such professional communities will help teachers to make contributions to the professional development of each other, as well. Therefore, both teachers content knowledge will develop and they will have the chance to implement what they learn in such professional communities (Banks 2015; Morrison and Luttenegger 2015).

CONCLUSION

The results at the end of the study can be listed as:

- The main aims of teachers in their contributions to the project were: learning about different cultures and people, gaining experience, developing vocational skills, and improving foreign language skills.
- The main concern of teachers throughout the project were: the level of students' knowledge, difficulty in using English (for teachers in public schools except the English-language teachers), disunity of intercultural sensitivity subject to their curricula, problems in online communication, time management, formation of lesson plans.
- The main strengths of teachers in the project in their opinions were: time management, material development, using English (for teachers in private schools and

the English-language teachers in public schools), and their own social skills.

- Positive results of the project from the teachers' perspective were; behaviour of students, ability to speak English, knowledge of different teaching method and techniques, sensitivity to different cultures, a desire to learn, and knowledge of alternative measurement and assessment methods in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The results obtained from this study can be used in a holistic manner, as follows: Teachers should know how to integrate the concept of intercultural sensitivity into their lesson plans. Thus, the schools they graduated from should offer some courses that address this concept. Also, teachers must be given a chance to try the applied designs, and to apply the in-service training on the subject given to them. It is believed that the findings of the study can contribute to the development of the empathy skills of students, respect for differences, cooperation, processing new information, and motivation in courses where intercultural sensitivity is integrated with the program. Thus, instructional plans should be revised and developed based on the findings of the study.
2. The suggestions for future studies developed from the results of this research study can be summarized as follows: Instructional designs with which intercultural viewpoints are integrated can be applied to different courses and to different groups, and then, opinions of teachers and students concerning the applications can be investigated, compared and analysed. Moreover, new projects could be extended to a broader range, so as to include more than four countries with different cultural characteristics.
3. This project which has generated positive outcomes for both teachers and students in the cultural and pedagogical sense by integrating intercultural aspects into the instructional design, is implemented on the secondary school level. However, this does not mean that it cannot be applied to other educational levels. On the contrary,

students will be able to learn how to construct new knowledge as early as such teaching methods are applied, and thus, they will be able to learn to manage mental activities, and effectively convert them into habits in the future.

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