

THE ETHICS CONVERSATION TOOL

INGE VAN DER WELLE
HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING
contact: i.c.vanderwelle@uva.nl

INTRODUCTION

Fieldwork is essential for Human Geography students to develop ethical competence, yet it often falls short, with student reflections remaining superficial. Additionally, the assumed universality of fieldwork experiences is increasingly questioned in light of diversifying student backgrounds. This educational research project identified four key elements for fostering ethical competence: 1) understanding core concepts, 2) scenario-based practice, 3) field experience, and 4) reflective practice. These elements informed the design of the *Ethics Conversation Tool*, which guided and evaluated three interventions aimed at improving students' ethical learning in fieldwork contexts.

METHODS

INTERVIEWS

5 students
6 lecturers
Goal: find common ground, understand challenges and ethical dilemma's

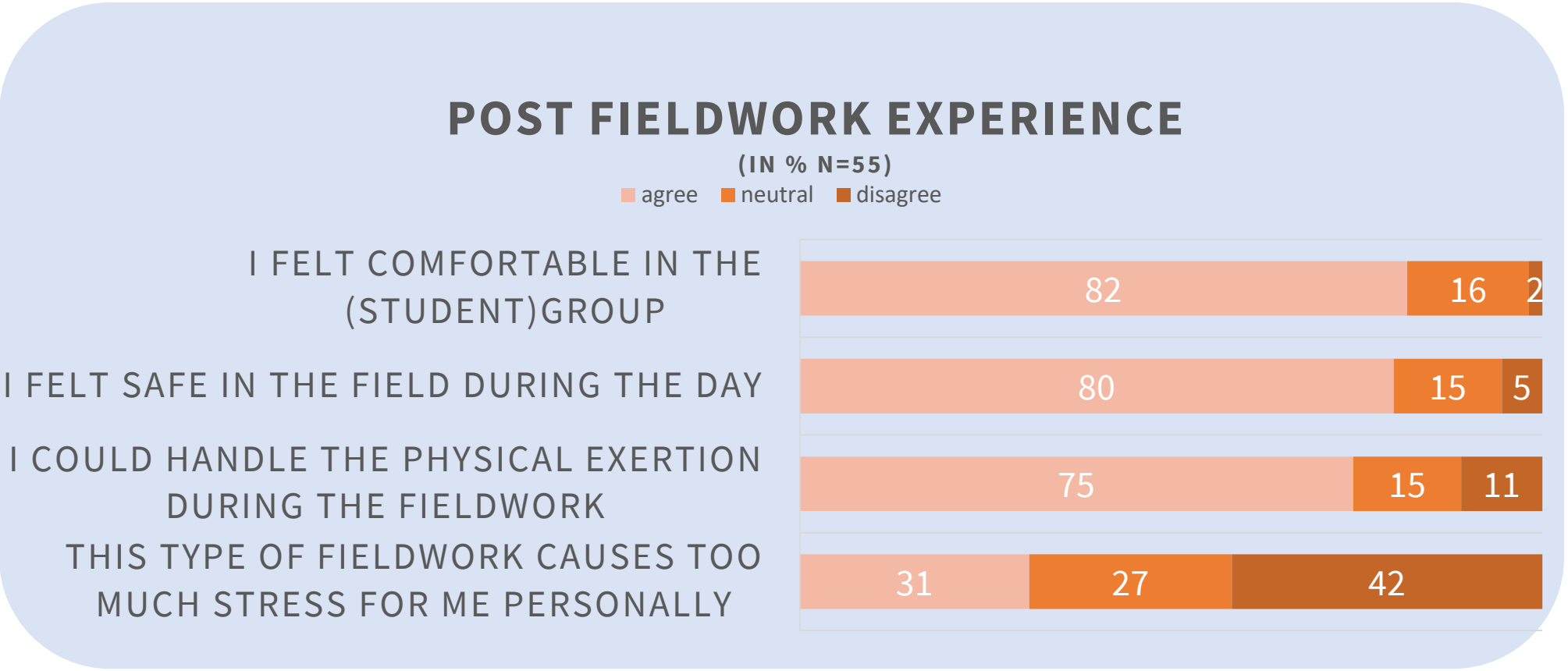
SURVEY

Pre- and post
1 week fieldwork
55 students
Goal: identify challenges, learning outcomes and value of fieldwork

FIELD DIARIES

14 assignments
Group work
6 students per group
Goal: understand ethical decisions and challenges

RESULTS



"I can super understand feeling so very **out of place**, so very almost feeling **like an intruder** when you are just coming there to take a survey. I sometimes almost feel **like a criminal** just by walking into someone's yard to ring their doorbell."

THE TOOL

CONCEPTS

shared knowledge base
repetition

SCENARIO'S

Apply & integrate component skills and prior knowledge
real experience based

EXPERIENCE

Supportive course climate
sufficient level of challenge
targeted feedback

REFLECTION

prompts
collective & individual
monitoring progress

Figure 2: Core elements and learning principles for ethics training in fieldwork activities

Interventions in ethics training

- ✓ Collective reflection with clear prompts and structured comparison deepens the reflective practice. Recorded conversations instead of written reflections are promising as this is decreasing work pressure for students and teachers and will be further tested and evaluated.
- ✓ Guided teacher conversations and thematic analysis of field diaries help to establish a shared knowledge base and monitor how students apply and integrate this knowledge.
- ✓ Student experiences and narratives are crucial teaching material, for scenario-based practice and as pre-fieldwork information and can help students cope with (mental and physical) challenges.

