

# *Evaluating the Students of the Intercultural Education Through Geography Course*

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**ABSTRACT** *In this paper, we present the items and the results of a test given within the optional course of Intercultural Education through Geography. The course was organized for fourth-year students of the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The items focused on whether the students realised the objectives of our course. The objectives we took into consideration were the achievement of several concepts used in Intercultural Education, the achievement of certain strategies, methods and techniques of learning through co-operation, and the formation of adequate intercultural attitudes. We used RWCT (Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking) techniques for the evaluation of the specified objectives. These techniques stimulated students' creativity, that is, their capacity of analyzing, comparing, synthesizing etc. The RWCT techniques that we used during the evaluation were: the cluster, the tree of ideas, the T table, and Venn diagrams. We also used the SWOT analysis, the lacunary test, the questionnaire, and the technique of dual discrimination. We concluded that the objectives of the course Intercultural Education through Geography were accomplished. The techniques and learning activities stimulated students' creativity and developed their abilities to analyse, compare, synthesize etc. Moreover, students considered the activity of solving the test an original and interesting challenge, and we, as professors, were delighted to read and evaluate their papers.*

**KEY WORDS:** *intercultural education, geography, RWCT, co-operative learning, creativity.*

## **Organizational Context**

The course of *Intercultural Education through Geography* was an optional one, organized for the fourth-year students of the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University, Cluj-Napoca, who attended the courses integrated in the pedagogical module and were trained to become teachers. Being a new course, it was organized in an independent manner. One hundred seventy one students with different specializations from the Department of Geography, and 17 from the Department of Biology-Geology, the Biology-Geology specialization, attended the course. Students from other departments chose the Intercultural Education course or other courses. During one semester, the students had the chance to attend 14 lectures and 28 seminars. Course attendance was optional, but the seminar attendance was compulsory because the seminars had mainly applicative features.

As there are no intercultural education courses planned for the high-school education in Romania, this can be done during the Geography, History, Civic Education, Literature classes etc. The course was targeted at accomplishing the following objectives:

- helping students to attain some concepts used in intercultural education;
- teaching the students strategies, methods and techniques through which they can have an interactive intercultural education;
- making students aware of the necessity of intercultural education;
- helping students to acquire some adequate intercultural attitudes.

In order to achieve these objectives both during the course and during the seminars, students were involved in individual activities, pair-work, and group (of four students) –work activities, and less in frontal ones. In the activities organized with the large group, the predominant method was conversation and not academic lecture. The activity was scheduled to take place in an amphitheatre due to the large number of students attending the course. Although the arrangement of chairs was not optimal and the working groups was very large, the activity in small groups could be done in excellent conditions, as our purpose aimed more at learning by doing rather than the rudimentary learning by memorizing. Along the years, we organized interactive courses in a similar manner. Moreover, we were interested in having the students think about several problems and cooperate in order to find solutions.

The evaluation we initially had in mind was the colloquium. In order to find out whether the students realized the objectives of the course, we chose a take-home “test” that we distributed to be solved individually. Thus, we took a great risk and because students use to “help” each other in writing these papers. However, the purpose of the test was not to strictly and objectively evaluate students’ knowledge and understandings, but rather to evaluate the quality of their knowledge in applying certain methods and techniques. The approach was not only a method of evaluating students’ knowledge, understandings and attitudes, but also one of meditating, of knowledge creation and expression in an original manner.

### **Analysis of the Items and Some Results**

The test consisted of 10 items presented in Appendix A. Some items are frequently used in evaluation. For example, the first two were binary discrimination items with build-up answers, the fourth was an incomplete answer, the eighth was of multiple discrimination type, and the last one an essay. The other items (Items 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9) proposed original evaluation techniques in a test, such as cluster (Item 3), T table (Item 5), SWOT analysis (Item 6), Venn diagram (Item 7), and the tree of ideas (Item 9).

The first two items were considered to be extremely easy as the students only had to choose one of the two variants. One student raised some concerns about these items, and we asked him to find the answer by himself. A few minutes later, he realized that we only wanted them to revise and clarify the concepts studied. For the construction of the cluster (Dulama, 2002; Steele, Meredith, & Temple, 1998; Temple, Steele, & Meredith, 2001), students had to meditate, discover, analyse, cooperate, and synthesize. As we were interested especially in the use of this technique and in the qualitative evaluation, we did not interpret the answers statistically or sociologically. Apart from the principles specified in the item, the students added many others, out of which we selected the following: correctness, trust, appreciation, freedom of speech, cultural interchange, non-discrimination, the

right to express one's opinion, joviality, impartiality, unprejudiced thinking, understanding, cooperation, responsibility, empathy, promotion of the positive aspects of a civilization, free thinking, attention for the others, encouragement, the courage to communicate one's personal ideas, common sense, equality, compassion, the encouragement for mutual help, for helping the weak ones, interest in other cultures and civilizations, opening towards new, solidarity, peaceful life with other ethnics, objective fact representations, sincerity, altruism, acceptance, highlighting the importance of each culture, harmonious cohabitation, promoting values, appreciating differences, conflict resolutions, avoiding stereotypes, and avoiding discriminatory language.

After reading the fourth item, a student asked: *What have we taken from the Chinese?* The answer was a question: *What is the English for the Romanian word 'porțelan'?* (the answer was "china"). Then, other students started to enumerate the gunpowder, the natural silk .... It was a good start and more than a simple game, although we chose the nations at random. Usually, for the items where some gaps have to be filled in, there is only one correct answer. But in our case, the answers accepted as correct could be diverse.

At the end, the sum of the selected answers was the following:

- Chinese: rice, china, natural silk, gunpowder, fan, compass, paper;
- Indians: music, spices, tea, yoga, the custom of wearing a nose-ring, cashmere, the jute, curry, chess, Gipsies;
- Americans: movies, Valentine's Day, Halloween, hot dog, McDonald's, fast food, Coca Cola, blue jeans, potato, corn, weekend; basketball, PC, pop corn, hip – hop;
- Turks: belly dancing, nut and syrup pastry, helva, the custom of having coffee, some stories, mosque, bazaar, moussaka, kebab, bribe, millet beer, bureaucracy, banquet;
- Greeks: elements of the architecture, democracy, myths, the Greek alphabet, sirtaki, the Olympic games, geometry, philosophy, theatre, the Orthodox religion, amphitheatre, the Doric columns;
- Italians: fashion, pizza, spaghetti, the Roman law, the greeting "ciao";
- Austrians: the banking system, the land acts, the waltz;
- French: perfumes, fashion, the Romanticism, manners, champagne, cognac, the code of laws;
- English: football, the 5 o'clock tea, whiskey, billiards, radar, the game of golf;
- Hungarians: several traditions, the goulash, the Easter custom of visiting the girls and women to wish them well, the czardas, the commemoration of the dead ones on the 1st of November, the paprika stew.

We noticed that students made associations that were not always valid. For example, the Hungarians are not the only ones to light up candles in cemeteries on November 1st, the day commonly known in the West as All Saint's Day, the Polish being another example of this kind.

When we grouped the elements that students highlighted according to their nature, several significant categories resulted: plants, art, religion, culture, customs, administration, organization, technology, drinks, food, objects, etc. When we



grouped them according to the time of borrowing, we noticed that there were some old elements, introduced in ancient or medieval times that survived (religion, some dishes and customs, construction elements), while others were very recent, borrowed mainly after the fall of the communist dictatorship (Valentine's Day, Halloween, hot dog, McDonald's, fast food, Coca Cola, weekend, PC, hip-hop) having the American civilization as a source. We noticed that some students did not specify concrete elements specific for one nation, but elements with a general character (neologisms, clothes, products, food, culture, traditions, etc.).

In the fifth item, we evaluated students' capacity to provide arguments for contradictory opinions (Dulama, 2002), without accepting one of them. In Table 1, we presented some of the arguments that students came up with.

Table 1  
Students' Arguments for the "Discovery of America."

The discovery of America was beneficial because:	The discovery of America was a catastrophe because:
1. From the New World the potato, the corn, the obacco, the beans and the tomato were brought to Europe.	1. Some cultures and civilizations disappeared (the Inca, the Aztec, the Maya).
2. Europe 'exported' technology to America.	2. Part of the pre-Columbian constructions had been destroyed.
3. New territories have been discovered	3. Slavery and slave-commerce appeared.
4. For many Europeans, America was a new homeland.	4. Some fauna species had been nearly exterminated (i.e. the bison).
5. From Europe they took the cow and the horse.	5. Some diseases specific to Europe had decimated the Amerindians.
6. The pre-Columbian civilizations had been discovered.	6. The colonization of the new territories had negatively affected the Amerindians.
7. Rich natural resources had been discovered (oil, coal, copper, forests etc.).	7. The Amerindians had been moved to reservations.
8. An ethnic mosaic had emerged.	8. The colonization had determined fights and wars.
9. New civilizations, cultures and states had resulted.	9. The Mafia - from Europe to America.
10. Massive emigration from Europe to America had taken place.	10. Racism.
11. The New World - a source of richness for the Europeans.	11. The "gold-rush."
12. The surface of the cultivated land increased	12. The native people had lost some of their rights.
	13. Overexploitation of the resources.
	14. The introduction of the fire arms in the USA
	15. The Colorado beetle had been brought to Europe.
	16. The rain forests had been destroyed

We noticed that certain aspects had been beneficial without causing any problems (the introduction of some plants and animals on one of the continents). We also noticed that the catastrophic aspects highlighted by the students usually referred to the Amerindians. Some of the students took into account only USA of the 20th century. These were the arguments that they gave referring to the benefits of America's discovery for the present day: the development of modern technologies; the reception of immigrants; the development of the Internet; the research programs for outer space; employment for the foreigners; investment into other states; the promotion of democracy; the development of the metropolis; USA-the guardian of world peace, the greatest economic and military power; USA offered refuge to the persecuted; USA was the country of all possibilities; help was



offered to the underdeveloped countries etc. The arguments sustaining the negative aspect of the discovery of America were the following: Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed; the fast-food network – “calorific bombs”; the influence upon other economies by means of the New York stock exchange; intense pollution; the exodus of non-American intelligentsia to the USA; the creation of the great networks in drug trafficking; the production of nuclear bombs and of chemical and biological weapons; the American life-style; the undertaking of some experiments that might no longer be controlled, etc. The fact that USA was a super power was considered both beneficial by some and catastrophic by others.

If this technique were used during the stage of knowledge, students’ horizon would be open to various discussions. Students might be requested to give ample arguments for those written in Table 1. For example: *Why do you think that the “gold rush” had catastrophic effects? Whom do you refer to?*

The sixth item was a SWOT diagnosis (Dulama, 2004) of the actual and future conditions for Romania’s integration in the EU. By means of the SWOT analysis (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*), the students identified the strengths and weaknesses of Romania’s internal situation, the external opportunities, and threats. The strengths and opportunities were considered as positive factors or conditions, and the weaknesses and threats as negative elements.

In Tables 2 and 3 some aspects that students mentioned and classified in one or another category are presented. We noticed that students related to this specific situation from the Romanian and not from the European perspective.

Table 2  
Students’ SWOT Analysis for Romania’s Integration in EU

Strengths	Opportunities
1. Free movement of the people and of the stocks	1. Financial help would be offered to the new members.
2. Monetary unity	2. Production of goods under the E.U. brand.
3. The possibility of working legally in other countries	3. No custom taxes for the imported products.
4. Recognition of the diplomas	4. More foreign investment.
5. Common legislation	5. Security would be ensured for all E.U. members.
6. Common constitution	6. Receiving E.U. tourists.
7. Guarantees for the foreign investors	7. Increase of security during war conditions.
8. The quality of the Romanian products would increase	8. More facilities for studying in western European universities.
9. Romania’s involvement in E.U. decision-taking	9. Great financial resources brought by the Romanians who work in the western European countries.
10. Higher standards alignment	10. Counselling upon the strategies of economic development and upon those of social protection.
11. The ecological products could be sold on the E.U. market	11. Romania’s integration into certain areas of influence.
12. The factories that brought losses to the national economy would be closed down	12. 12.development projects financed by the E.U.
13. Reforms in the following systems: justice, education, health etc.	13. Creation of certain associations.
14. More employment opportunities (more jobs)	14. Romania’s involvement in peacekeeping actions.
15. No borders	15. Romania would have strong states as partners.
16. The minimum salary would increase	16. Intercultural exchange
	17. Multiculturalism

Table 3  
Students' SWOT Analysis for Romania's Integration in EU

Weaknesses	Threats
1. No customs check-outs	1. A certain European policy would be imposed
2. The national character would be weakened	2. The invasion of the Romanian market with E.U. products
3. Loss of some traditions and customs	3. The levelling of Romanian products respecting the European standards would be very expensive
4. Romanian emigration to western Europe	4. Increase of competition in the retail market
5. Romania's involvement in conflicts in the territory of the other states	5. Immigrants would force the eastern and northern frontiers of Romania
6. The people's prejudices within the Carpathian space	6. Prices would be those of the E.U., but the salaries would not
7. Corruption	7. Of certain networks of drug, weapons and human trafficking targeting the E.U.
8. Poor quality of the infrastructure	8. Terrorism
9. People's incapacity to adapt themselves to the new laws, rules, situations	9. Reception from the E.U. of certain people with deviant behaviour
10. Poor quality of some of the Romanian products	10. Certain laws and a certain policy would be imposed on Romania in order to level it to the European standards
11. commercialisation of some Romanian resources or products for very low prices (e.g. wood, scrap iron)	11. The Romanian economy would be destroyed by the foreign pseudo-investors
12. Prices would go up	12. Terrains would be sold to rich Europeans
13. Emigration of young Romanians to the other E.U. countries	13. Development of mafia-like networks
14. Professional quality of the human resources	14. Involvement of other states in Romania's internal affairs
15. Exodus of the intelligentsia	15. Loss of the Romanian national identity and sovereignty
16. Bureaucracy	16. Certain firms would go bankrupt
17. Romania would export cheap and low qualified labour	17. Imitation of certain unsuitable, dangerous and unspecific forms of behaviour for Romanians
18. Low degree of civilization	
19. Low living standards, much below the European average	
20. No internal financial resources for investment	
21. Rise of the taxes	
22. Increase of criminality rate	
23. Excessive exploitation of the natural resources	
24. High taxes for the people and for the profitable firms	

The answers to this item reflect, even only at subconscious level, some of the personal attitudes towards Romania's integration in the EU. Students made predictions according to their special knowledge (geography) about the situations of other countries that were entering the EU and according to the Romanian events presented in the mass media. They observed objectively a lot of strengths and opportunities, but the facts made them notice the weaknesses and threats of integration as well.

The seventh item is a graphic organizer (Dulama, 2002; Steele, Meredith, & Temple, 2000) where the students were requested to compare the Romanians to the Dutch in order to discover the common features (these were introduced in the space where the two circles overlapped) and the differences inside the other part of each circle, respectively. As we targeted a change in the students' attitudes, we asked them to highlight the features that were characteristic to the Dutch or the Romanians.

The positive features assigned to Romanians were the following: hospitable,

joyful, communicative, possessing a sense of humour, sensitive, tolerant, intelligent, spontaneous, religious, ingenious, altruist, well-intentioned, and friendly. The negative features of the Romanians that students considered were the following: traditionalists, conservators, speculative, Latin temperament and spirit, lazy, party-loving, Balkan mentality, having many prejudices, greedy, liars, indolent, corrupted, proud, boastful, nationalists, and unpunctual.

The students mentioned the following positive features specific to the Dutch: good at commerce, efficient, practical, perseverant, instructed, townspeople, tolerant, ambitious, pragmatic, resolute, clean, demanding, intelligent, constant, non-conformist, serious, open-minded, firm, stable, punctual, rigorous, active, meticulous, and disciplined. The negative features assigned to Dutch were: sober, individualist, party-lovers, cold, and libertine.

Finally, students considered the following features as common to both Romanians and Dutch: cultivated, creative, enterprising, loving flowers and animals, flexible, funny, inventive, having good esthetical values and perception of the beautiful, easy to adapt, intelligent, hardworking, sociable, tolerant, sincere, patriots, good sportsmen. Some of the students noticed that both nations belong to the white race, they are Europeans, and that the Dutch are usually blonde.

These answers do not reflect the authentic features of Romanians. In the Romanian literature and philosophical works, the features considered as being specific to the Romanians are very much disputed. Some authors highlighted some positive features, such as hospitality and others highlighted negative ones. Moreover, the nowadays behaviour of the Romanians had been greatly influenced by the 50 years of communist regime and the contemporary transition of the country to a free-market economy. Thus, an objective generalization based on students' answers was not justified, as students came from different environments (urban or rural) or they belonged to various ethnic groups and expressed their subjective understandings.

As much as the features of the Dutch were concerned, the subjectivity of the answers was even greater because students had not met them (i.e., the Dutch), but they "knew" the Dutch from other sources, such as films, the news, reports or various personal "stories" (of those who visited Holland). We noticed that students enumerated only a few features that might have been interpreted as negative, but it was debatable whether a feature might have been judged as "good" or "bad," "positive" or "negative." We also noticed that several students mentioned some features as being specific only to Romanians or to the Dutch, while others considered the same features as characteristics of both nations. What was really interesting in intercultural education was that students underlined the personality features that they appreciated in the Dutch and that they considered worth having for the Romanians as well.

The eighth item was apparently extremely easy as it requested the students only to recognize certain attitudes that targeted intercultural education. The real purpose of the item was to invite the students to think about their own attitudes and behaviour in various situations from their university environment and outside it, to make them conscious of their own attitudes, and judge or evaluate their own level of tolerance. In order to choose by circling some assertions, students should previously make a value judgment of their own attitudes.



For the ninth item (Dulama, 2002), students specified the prejudices that they identified in Romania, and not their own. We noticed that many of the students did not present prejudices, but the elements specific to Romania and the Romanian people.

These were the prejudices that students mentioned:

**Ethnic prejudices:**

- all Gipsies are thieves;
- Gipsies are low people;
- Hungarians want to own Transylvania;
- Gipsies steal and do not want to work;
- Germans are stingy;
- Hungarians hate Romanians;
- Gipsies are lazy and dirty;
- all Gipsies are uncultivated;
- Hungarians are bad and selfish people;
- all Moldavians (from the Moldavian Republic) are rowdy and involved in illegal affairs.

**Sexual prejudices:**

- it is bad to start having sex before getting married;
- sex is taboo

**Prejudices related to / against men and women:**

- man is superior to woman;
- the woman's place is in the kitchen;
- the woman is promoted using dishonest means (no matter the field);
- the woman is weak;
- the man dictates in the family;
- the women have no character or are very easily influenced;
- in a family, the man talks and the woman listens and obeys;

**Social prejudices:**

- why does somebody else have it if I don't, so let it lose it;
- if everybody steals, I steal too;
- why should I help the others when nobody helps me?;
- all the rich have stolen to become what they are;
- one is better paid abroad;
- if you want justice, do it yourself;
- if you have money, justice is done to you;
- everybody gets rich using dishonest means;
- I should steal, I will not get caught anyway;
- I don't get anything if I continue being honest;
- money can buy anything;
- the poor are inferior to the rich;
- the Police does nothing;
- the "system" (i.e. the government) is always guilty;

- it is accepted to beat your child ("I gave you life, so I can take it away");
- let me do my thing and I will let you do the same;
- if I am honest, what have I to gain?;
- if I bribe, I can get away with it;
- money does not bring happiness, but it supports it;
- those who make illegal affairs live well;
- I want something to change, but let the others do it;
- it could have been worse;
- if you don't bribe, you cannot solve your problems;
- if you have no money you cannot be happy;
- knock at all doors until one opens, bribe and the first door will (open);
- all the rockers are Satanists and dirty;
- what have I got if I am honest? ;
- I don't really need it, but if it is for free...;
- I have to know what the other does so that I can interfere in his or her plans and change them;
- if I bribe, I get what I want;
- we have laws in order to break them;
- money and relationships solve anything;
- everybody steals;

**Political prejudices:**

- we won't sell our country;
- the state has the duty of helping us;
- the govern is guilty for all the bad things that happen;
- all politicians are thieves and liars;
- politicians are corrupted;

**Prejudices related to /against the young and the old:**

- young people have no future in Romania;
- old people are always right;

**Prejudices related to / against work:**

- I wonder what the boss says about this;
- it's all right even like this, don't bother;
- nobody works;
- if my colleague doesn't work, why should I ?;
- why should I do something when everybody does nothing? ;
- why should I work when I can steal? ;
- if you work honestly you don't get far;
- if I go abroad, I will succeed;
- we pretend to be working, they pretend to be paying us;
- what we can do today, we don't postpone until tomorrow, but until the day after tomorrow because it may be solved in time or it may not be necessary to be done any longer;
- I can have money even if I don't work;

- let the others work, I may as well do nothing;
- I go abroad to earn money;
- it will be all right like this (although it is not), don't make more efforts to correct it;
- if you have the right relationships, you'll get a good job;

**Prejudices related to / against education:**

- somebody can think for everybody;
- higher education makes you superior;
- private education (universities) is better;
- if you learn, you may not succeed in life;
- all those having higher education are intelligent;
- it's better to earn money than to study;
- it's not necessary to study in order to succeed in life;

**Prejudices related to / against foreigners and to / against foreign countries:**

- foreigners are better than Romanians;
- only foreign investment can save us now;
- abroad, even the dogs have pretzels around their tails;
- I will certainly have a better life abroad; anywhere is better than here in Romania;
- abroad is better; I have to build my future abroad;

**Prejudices related to / against the inhabitants of different Romanian historical provinces:**

- those from Bucharest are superior to those outside the capital;
- those from Oltenia are stupid, uncultivated, loving sub-culture music;
- all peasants are illiterate;
- all peasants are stupid;

**Prejudices related to / against the Romanian people:**

- Romanians are the best, the smartest, and the most versatile;
- the Romanian people has been always persecuted;
- we are different from the rest of the world;
- the Romanian people cannot keep the pace with the other peoples of the world;

**Prejudices related to / against Romania:**

- Romania is the black sheep of Europe;
- there is no salvation for Romania;
- we will never make it to the E.U.;
- in this country everything goes wrong;
- the country cannot be freed from corruption;
- our country has rich resources.

We considered that students realistically identified the prejudices that were specific to many Romanians. It was remarkable that no student mentioned religious, racial prejudices, or those related to the sexual options of the individuals, thus demonstrating that those were not specific to the Romanians. Wishing to clas-



sify the information, some of the students grouped the prejudices in different categories.

In their essays, the students highlighted many types of discrimination:

- Racial discrimination (many people consider the whites superior to the other races): the black people's situation in the USA, as specific to different centuries; the nowadays situation of the Asians in the U.S.A; the Aborigine in Australia; the Amerindians; the apartheid policy in South Africa;
- Ethnic discrimination: the attitude towards the Mexicans in the USA; the situation of the Gipsy in Eastern Europe, including Romania; the attitude towards children belonging to mixed families (e.g. Romanian-Hungarian); the Hungarians' attitude towards the Romanians from Transylvania after the Vienna Diktat; the nowadays attitude of the Hungarians towards the Romanians from Hungary; the Germans' attitude towards the Jews and the other nations during World War II; the attitude towards immigrants in the USA; the Serbians' attitude towards Albanians and Bosniaks; the Iraqis' and the Turkish people's attitude towards the Kurdish people; the Israelis' attitude towards the Palestinians;
- Sexual discrimination (the women are considered inferior to men): the women's situation in Romania; the Muslim women's statute; the African women's situation.
- Political discrimination: in the former communist and socialist states (for example, the Russian "Gulag"), the discrimination against those defying the communist parties (the "opposition"); the American attitude towards the communist Cubans.

For the last item where the students are asked to write a short essay and they chose different subjects:

- Religious (confessional) discrimination: the mutual discriminatory attitude of Irish Catholics and British Protestants; the attitude of the communists in Romania towards the Greek-Catholics and towards religions other than the Orthodox one; the attitude of the Orthodox in Romania towards the Greek-Catholic;
- Social discrimination ("The rich with the rich, the poor with the poor", T. E. C.- Student)

Although in mass media, they speculated very much the discrimination of the Hungarians in Romania, we noticed that only one student targeted this subject, as she felt to be in a disadvantage because she was part of a mixed family. No student having Hungarian or German as his or her mother tongue felt ethnically discriminated, even though he or she chose to study in Romanian language. 'Babeş-Bolyai' University, as a multicultural university, offered students the chance to study in their mother tongue. Romanian, Hungarian and German could have been chosen.

In the Romanian space, the students presented mostly the discrimination against the women and the Gypsies, this being a strong indication of the existing reality. No student highlighted in his or her essay a discriminatory attitude against the HIV infected children, which is a specific attitude, or against homosexuals or prostitutes, which is rarely manifested.

A student remarked that the Romanian code of laws contains stipulations that forbid discrimination on the following criteria: race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social status, beliefs, sex or sexual options, or any other criterion that leads to constraints or has as a purpose to do away with the recognition, the use or the exertion of the human rights in conditions of equality. The student also highlighted that, despite the laws, discriminations of any kind existed in Romania, predominant being the sexual ones (M. M. - student).

We were impressed by a paragraph written by the student T. E. D.: "They say that the black people are 'coloured people,' but think how many colours white people may have: when they are born, white people's colour is pink, when they feel sick, they turn 'white as a sheet,' when they are ashamed they turn red, when they get hurt, they turn blue, and when they get angry, it is said that they turn green. So, who are the coloured people?"

The students were asked to write how they would approach this problem during a Geography lesson. We considered that the most efficient strategy was exemplified by the student D. M. She pictured a teacher who, in order to get the white people sensitive to this problem and to prove that they were not superior to the black ones, grouped them (the pupils) in two groups taking into account the colour of the eyes, the colour of the clothes, the colour of the pupils' hair etc. With the group who "took" the roles of the black people, she was tough, she even humiliated them. She did not let them express their opinions or if they said something she accused them of being terribly wrong while thinking in that way. Sometimes, she even asked them to sit down in front of the other group (that of the "white people") and requested the others to stare at them. But, she was very tolerant with the group of the pupils acting as the 'whites.' The pupils realized that, 'without being aware of it', they had negative attitudes towards the black people and that these attitudes are damaging.

### Conclusions

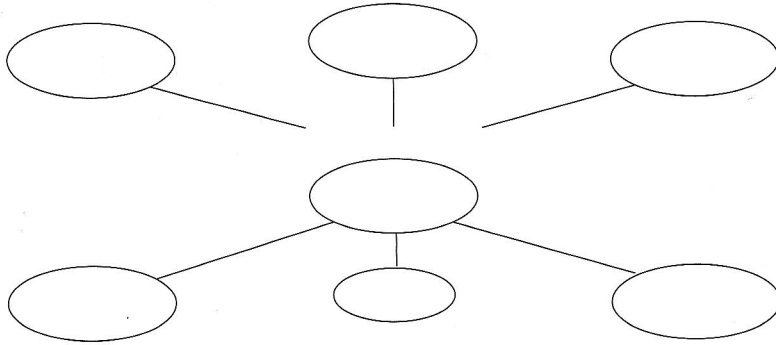
The results indicate that the main objectives of the course *Intercultural Education through Geography* were in general accomplished. The techniques used in the construction of the items, which are usually used only in the teaching and learning activities, were appropriate for evaluating students' understandings and attitudes. The employed techniques stimulated students' creativity and developed their abilities to analyse, compare, synthesize, organize the information graphically, etc. More importantly, the test was a new and interesting activity for the majority of the students and we, as instructors, were delighted to read and evaluate students' answers.

### Appendix A

#### Test Items

1. Intercultural education recognizes the social, cultural and economic interdependences and interactions of the ethno-cultural groups in a country. True / False
2. Multicultural education clarifies one's ethnic identity, reduces prejudices and stereotypes, promotes the appreciation of the others, cultural pluralism and equal participation in social institutions. True / False

3. The intercultural attitudes stipulate the affirmation of each culture and the synthesis of the common elements in order to construct a new civilization. Elaborate a *cluster* in which you have to specify the *principles, attitudes and values* you observe and promote during the Geography lessons (e.g., tolerance, mutual respect, culture complementarity etc.) in order to have the students build their intercultural attitudes.



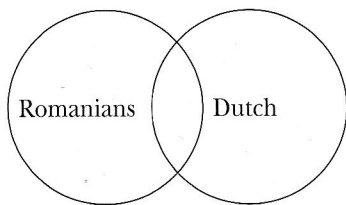
4. In Romania, there are several elements we have taken from other nations. Specify these elements (i.e., products, customs, traditions, culture etc.) in the gaps.

Chinese ..... Indians ..... Americans ..... Turks .....  
 Greeks..... Italians ..... Austrians..... French..... English .....  
 Hungarians .....

5. The discovery of America is considered beneficial by some and catastrophic by others. In Table 1, specify five arguments in order to defend both opinions.

6. Make a SWOT analysis referring to the integration of Romania in the E.U.

7. Complete the Venn diagram specifying the features of Romanians, the features of Dutch and those that characterize both nations. Read the text from the course handout. Highlight the features of the Dutch that would be worth having as related to the Romanian people.



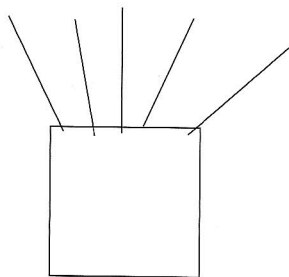
8. Circle the assertions that refer to adequate intercultural attitudes.

- I draw the attention of the people that indulge in pejorative commentaries that are prejudicial from a racial/ethnic/sexual point of view
- I express my opinion openly when a person humiliates somebody else or acts inadequately.
- I think of the impact of my commentaries or actions before talking or acting in a certain way.
- I refuse to be involved in jokes prejudicial to any group, culture or sex.
- I “check” the reality before taking seriously into account somebody else’s sup-



position.

- I avoid using language that reinforces negative stereotypes.
  - I get involved in helping the new people in my group, people coming from other cultures, having different ages, being characterized by various cultural levels, feel welcomed and accepted.
  - I try to get to know, appreciate and promote the values of other cultures and I try to respect their holidays and special events.
  - I get involved in helping my group respect/accomplish the legal requests.
  - I support the organizational policies related to equal treatment, including combating those who do not observe or defy these.
  - I support the others to manifest them for cultural diversity.
  - I oppose organizational policies and procedures that lead to somebody's exclusion.
  - I create a learning environment where each person is respected and valued.
  - I educate myself and the others in the field of other people's cultures.
  - I refuse to take part in associations/groups that allow or promote racist, discriminatory or prejudicial values and practices.
9. Draw a tree of ideas specifying the prejudices existent in the Romanian space, prejudices the Romanian society should get rid of.



10. Write an essay on discrimination specific to a certain space (continent, country, region) focusing on racial, sexual, religious and ethnic discrimination and specify the means you could use in integrating these matters in a Geography class.

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