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3 **Competences for democratic culture: An empirical study of an**  
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6 **intercultural citizenship project in language pedagogy**  
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16 **Abstract**  
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19 This article reports on a pedagogical experiment in foreign language teaching in higher  
20 education. It analyses the democratic competences developed by Argentinian and UK-  
21 based students as they used Skype to design a leaflet that addressed a real world issue:  
22 the Argentinian military dictatorship and its manipulation of the 1978 Football World  
23 Cup. The data consists of students' discussions of this highly disturbing human rights  
24 issue. A first level of analysis focused on identifying evidence of democratic  
25 competences using the newly developed Council of Europe's conceptual model of  
26 *Competences for Democratic Culture* (2016). In a second level of analysis, the data was  
27 categorised within the framework of Article 2.2 of the United Nations *Declaration on*  
28  
29 *Human Rights Education and Training* (2011). This research study provides an  
30 empirical test of these two frameworks in the field of language education, an aspect  
31 which has not been investigated before. It also contributes to our understanding of the  
32 potential of intercultural citizenship projects in achieving the goals of human rights  
33 education in foreign language teaching. Results indicate the development of substantial  
34 democratic competences defined in the Council of Europe's model.  
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3 **Keywords**

4 Language learning and teaching, intercultural, citizenship, human rights education,  
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6 competences for democratic culture, Council of Europe, United Nations, Argentina, UK  
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30 **I Introduction**

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33 It has long been argued that universities should nurture civically minded and engaged  
34 individuals with a sense of moral responsibility, respect for humanity, sensitivity,  
35 empathy and concern for social justice (Dewey, 1916; Taylor, 2005). White (2013, p.  
36 112) asserts that the ‘purpose of the university should be grounded in the concept of  
37 citizenship rather than the promise of increased future earnings and research  
38 consultancy work’. Indeed, fostering civic literacy in society strengthens democracy and  
39 the view that higher education should prepare civic-minded graduates for the real world,  
40 both local and global, is the starting point of this study (Ehrlich, 2000; Kreber, 2016).  
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51 The field of intercultural education in foreign language pedagogy has been  
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53 evolving steadily and rapidly over the past three decades, and has included in its  
54 purposes intercultural and citizenship competences with issues of human rights, social  
55 justice and equality (Osborn, 2006). Theoretical developments and research (Byram,  
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3 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014a,b; Guilherme, 2002, 2007; Osler, 2012; Osler & Starkey,  
4  
5 2005, 2015; Starkey, 2011) have recognised the unique contribution that foreign  
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7 language teaching can make to citizenship education that promotes action at the  
8  
9 transnational level. Hitherto, however, little attention has been paid to how this theory  
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11 can be realised in the curriculum.

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14 This article addresses this gap through the examination of democratic  
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16 competences mobilised during an online project between language undergraduates in  
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18 the Argentinian and British higher education sectors, which included taking action in  
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20 the community. Citizenship education is of fundamental importance in higher education  
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22 in both Argentina and the UK. However, teaching foreign languages to develop  
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24 citizenship competences is a relatively new concept, and given that the pedagogical  
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26 experiment described in this article took place in two different contexts – the  
27  
28 European/British and the Latin American/Argentinian – it is important to consider their  
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30 distinct ideological and educational discourses.  
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34 From the European perspective, language learning provides an opportunity to  
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36 prepare learners as global citizens, capable of participating democratically in  
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38 international arenas. For example, Guilherme (2002, 2007) advocates the development  
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40 of an attitude in language learners which goes beyond national identities and appreciates  
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42 the complexities and multiple identities of today's globalised world. In support of this  
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44 view, Byram (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014a,b) introduces the notion of 'intercultural  
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46 citizenship', which highlights the potential of language learning to give citizenship an  
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48 international dimension whereby learners participate and act in the real world using  
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50 their foreign languages.  
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54 These perspectives resonate with Osler and Starkey (2005, 2015), who bring  
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56 principles of Human Rights Education (HRE) into the field of language learning.  
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3 Another influence comes from the Council of Europe (CoE) with the development of a  
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5 *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*  
6  
7 (2010a). More recently, in 2016, the CoE published a new model of *Competences for*  
8  
9 *Democratic Culture* (CDC) as a response to the urgent need to integrate democratic  
10  
11 values and intercultural dialogue into curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment.  
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13 There are however very few empirical studies testing these ideas in the field of foreign  
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15 language teaching, except those that have been reported by Byram, Golubeva, Hui and  
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17 Wagner (2017), Porto and Byram (2015), Porto (2014), Yulita and Porto (2017).  
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21 These European-based ideas have been picked up by the language teaching  
22  
23 community in Latin America, frequently associated with learning the English language.  
24  
25 A few reports of pedagogical initiatives testing Guilherme, Byram, Osler and Starkey's  
26  
27 theories have been published. These date from 2003 with a seminar entitled 'Citizenship  
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29 and language teaching' and a subsequent report (British Council, 2008) describing  
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31 pedagogical proposals in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts in three Latin  
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33 American countries, one of them being Argentina (Hillyard, 2008). Another more recent  
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35 British Council initiative known as 'Connecting Classrooms' has promoted exchange  
36  
37 and collaboration between schools internationally, including between the UK and  
38  
39 Argentina, to address global issues and develop teachers' awareness of the potential of  
40  
41 global citizenship education in English language teaching practices. Further reports can  
42  
43 be found in a Special Issue of the *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics* edited by  
44  
45 Porto (2015) with pedagogical proposals incorporating principles of intercultural  
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47 citizenship education in English language classrooms from all education sectors.  
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51 The notion of citizenship in language teaching in Argentina also has a strong  
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53 focus on building and strengthening national identity, and curricular innovations  
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55 (Barboni, Beacon & Porto, 2008; Beacon, Barboni, Porto & Spoturno, 2013; Ministerio  
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3 de Educación, 2011) incorporating principles of citizenship education in EFL primary  
4 and secondary sectors have been developed with this focus. Very few pedagogical  
5 innovations integrating language learning and citizenship have been reported (see, for  
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10 example, Siderac & Paez, 2013). One of the most influential initiatives in the primary  
11 and secondary school sectors has been developed by Ferradas (2008a, 2008b, 2009)  
12 under the banner of *The Value of Values Campaign* with EFL teaching materials  
13 focusing predominantly on national issues and set within the context of the Bicentennial  
14 of Argentina's freedom from colonial rule commemorated on 9 July 2016. There are no  
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21 empirical research studies to date of these pedagogical proposals.

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23 The purpose of this article is to demonstrate and analyse how foreign language  
24 teaching can address human rights issues in practice as part of intercultural citizenship  
25 education, and to relate this to two frameworks: the United Nations *Declaration on*  
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The article continues with an overview of these two models as the  
underlying conceptual frameworks for this study. It then describes the participants and  
the pedagogical experiment. Following this, the article explains the method utilised in  
the analysis of the data, presents the results and discusses the findings of this study.

## II Human Rights Education

The research study was grounded in the definition of human rights education in Article  
2.1 and the principles underpinning Article 2.2 of the UNDHRET, adopted by the  
General Assembly on 19 December 2011. Article 2.1 declares that:

Human rights education and training comprises all educational, training, information,  
awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and  
observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter

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3 alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with  
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5 knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to  
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7 empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of  
8  
9 human rights.

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12 Article 2.2 states that human rights education and training encompasses:  
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17 (a) Education about human rights, which includes providing knowledge and  
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19 understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and  
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21 the mechanisms for their protection;  
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24 (b) Education through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that  
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26 respects the rights of both educators and learners;  
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30 (c) Education for human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and  
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32 exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.  
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36 The essence of each of these three components is encapsulated in the use of the  
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38 prepositions *about*, *through* and *for*. Education *about* human rights answers the question  
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40 of what content should be covered; education *through* human rights answers the  
41  
42 question of how it should be learnt and taught, whilst education *for* human rights is  
43  
44 concerned with linking the theory (the content that is learnt) and the practice (the real  
45  
46 world where the learning is to be applied). The three components are interconnected and  
47  
48 complement each other. Importantly, they must all be present in HRE (Froman, 2015;  
49  
50 Struthers, 2015).  
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54 The research study in this article was evaluated through the lens of UNDHRET.  
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56 However, given that this tripartite framework of ‘about, through and for’ lacks  
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58 sufficient detail for curriculum design, teaching and assessment (Struthers, 2015), the

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3 CDC model (CoE, 2016) was used to compensate for this limitation. This conceptual  
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5 model consists of 20 competences – 3 sets of values, 6 attitudes, 8 skills and 3 bodies of  
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7 knowledge and critical understanding, as follows:  
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12 *Values*

- 13 • Valuing human dignity and human rights
- 14 • Valuing cultural diversity
- 15 • Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law
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23 *Attitudes*

- 24 • Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
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- 26 • Respect
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- 28 • Civic-mindedness
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- 30 • Responsibility
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- 32 • Self-efficacy
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- 34 • Tolerance of ambiguity
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41 *Skills*

- 42 • Autonomous learning skills
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- 44 • Analytical and critical thinking skills
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- 46 • Skills of listening and observing
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- 48 • Empathy
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- 51 • Flexibility and adaptability
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- 53 • Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
- 54
- 55 • Co-operation skills
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- Conflict-resolution skills

### *Knowledge and Critical Understanding*

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

The model describes these competences in depth and states that their development facilitates living peacefully together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies, a phrase borrowed from the CoE's White Paper (2010b). The term 'culture of democracy' rather than 'democracy' (CoE, 2016, p. 15) is used in the model to emphasise the fact that democratic institutions and laws can only work if grounded in a culture of democracy, which involves democratic competences, such as the aforementioned values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding. In this article, the CDC model is used to evaluate the degree to which the competences have been learnt.

## **III Present study**

### *1 Participants*

There were 99 participants for this study, of whom 23 were UK-based students (20 British, 1 Italian, 1 German and 1 Belgian) and 76 were Argentinian. Most of the research participants were female (89 compared to 10 male) in their late teens and early twenties. The cohorts consisted of groups of first year undergraduates learning Spanish

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3 at a British university and second year undergraduates learning English at an  
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5 Argentinian university. The imbalance in number of students and different years of  
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7 study across the two countries was due to differing student enrolment in the two  
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9 participating universities and the teaching responsibilities of the teachers/researchers of  
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11 this study. In terms of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*  
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13 (CoE, 2001), the participants' language proficiency ranged from B1 to B2 levels.  
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## 16 17 18 **2 Pedagogical experiment**

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20 This pedagogical experiment was part of a larger project carried out for 16 weeks in  
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22 2013 and consisted of an online 5 week-long phase, where students communicated over  
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24 Skype to design a leaflet for distribution to the public. Some of the pedagogical aims of  
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26 this project have been evaluated in previous publications by Porto and Byram (2015),  
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28 who found students' identification with a transnational community and levels of  
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30 criticality that led them to action in the community, whilst Yulita and Porto (2017)  
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32 examined to what extent a theory of intercultural citizenship had been implemented in  
33  
34 language teaching. The appearance of the UNDHRET in 2011 and the CoE's CDC  
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36 model in 2016 provide the opportunity to review the data from a new angle and at the  
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38 same time consider one way in which these frameworks can be used.  
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42 The project focused on a dark period in the history of Argentina - a military  
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44 dictatorship (1976-1983) which led to the disappearance (state-sanctioned murder) of  
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46 thousands of people. The 1978 World Cup, held in Argentina, was used to mask the  
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48 crimes and human rights abuses committed by the Military Junta to eradicate political  
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50 dissent. Since the reintroduction of democracy in 1983, the people of Argentina together  
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52 with organisations such as *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* ('The Mothers of Plaza de  
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54 Mayo'), *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* ('The Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo') and  
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3 H.I.J.O.S (an acronym for ‘Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice Against  
4 Oblivion and Silence’) have demanded an inquiry into the fate of victims of kidnapping  
5 and other human rights violations.  
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9 The choice of this particular topic was due to the fact that in 2013, when the  
10 project was completed, Argentina celebrated 30 years of democracy after the end of the  
11 dictatorship period in 1983. The Argentine and UK-based students researched the  
12 dictatorship and the World Cup in their foreign language lessons using texts in their  
13 foreign languages (Spanish in the UK and English in Argentina) and discussed this  
14 historical event of contemporary relevance in their respective classrooms. Students  
15 analysed the media representations of the dictatorship and the World Cup in print and  
16 other media of the time. They thought of other instances around the world in which  
17 sports events had been used to mask political dissent, human rights violations or  
18 conflict.  
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32 The pedagogical aims of the project were to raise awareness of media  
33 manipulation and censorship during international sporting events, and the learning  
34 outcomes for students were to foster the ability to critically analyse events of  
35 contemporary relevance, whilst developing democratic competences, such as respect,  
36 empathy and the value of justice. In terms of language learning, the project was  
37 intended to develop linguistic competences so that students can act as, and become  
38 more effective intercultural mediators (Byram, 1997; Byram & Zarate, 1994; CoE,  
39 2001).  
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49 Intercultural mediation involves the ability to analyse, interpret, explain and  
50 compare cultural phenomena using languages as tools for understanding,  
51 communicating and mediating between different interpretations and perspectives. In  
52 groups of mixed nationalities, students then collaboratively designed a leaflet in  
53 English  
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3 and Spanish to raise awareness of the human rights violations that happened during the  
4  
5 World Cup in 1978 (examples of these leaflets can be found in Yulita & Porto, 2017).  
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7 In this article the focus is on empirical evidence for democratic competences mobilised  
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9 as the students managed the task of creating the leaflet over Skype.  
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12 The citizenship dimension of the project involved students designing and  
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14 implementing a civic action in their local communities (i.e. actions in the real world  
15  
16 based on their learning) with the aim of raising awareness of human rights issues locally  
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18 and globally and creating change through the dissemination of the leaflet (details of  
19  
20 civic actions can be found in Porto & Byram, 2015).  
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### 24 25 **3 Data analysis**

26 The main source of evidence concentrated on conversational data, which involved  
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28 Skype conversations transcribed verbatim, i.e. without editing in terms of grammatical,  
29  
30 lexical, syntactical or any other inaccuracies. In this article, data are presented in the  
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32 language that was used by the students, without corrections and with the  
33  
34 teacher/researcher's translation into English in cases where Spanish was used. Groups  
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36 of four or five students met over Skype to design the leaflet, each group consisting of  
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38 one UK-based student and either three or four Argentinian students.  
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41 These data were collected in 2013 from the project as previously described, and  
42  
43 analysed following the guidelines and procedures for content analysis in Corbin and  
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45 Strauss (2014), Hatch (2002) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011). Based on the  
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47 CDC conceptual model, I formulated the main research question in this study *What*  
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49 *democratic competences did the students mobilise during the design of the leaflet?*. A  
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51 first level of analysis consisted of coding the data by separating it into pieces  
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53 corresponding to natural breaks and assigning a code that corresponded to a competence  
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3 from the CDC model. Using the model was helpful in terms of following an  
4 interpretative systematic method, and once the emerging themes were coded, a second  
5 level of analysis consisted in categorising them within the framework of the  
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10 UNDHRET. This process led to the formulation of three operational questions (a) *what*  
11 *did the students learn?*; (b) *how did the students learn?*; and (c) *in what ways were the*  
12 *students oriented towards action?*. These sub-questions corresponded to the tripartite  
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15 UNDHRET framework and aimed at translating and operationalising the more general  
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18 research question into more specific, concrete ones.

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21 Confidentiality and ethical issues were addressed. Sufficient information  
22 describing the goals and procedures and the method employed and an assurance that  
23 confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained were provided. All participants  
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26 were informed that although quotes from the data collected would be used for analysis,  
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pseudonyms would be employed in an attempt to reduce the possibility of being  
recognisable to other researchers or readers. Students then signed informed consent  
forms to allow disclosure of their productions. How the UNDHRET and the CDC can  
be seen to work in practice is demonstrated in the next part of this article, through the  
presentation of the findings in the answer to the three operational research questions in  
order to address the more significant general research question posited in this study.

#### IV Results

The results are presented under the three components of the UNDHRET (1) education  
*about* human rights; (2) education *through* human rights; and (3) education *for* human  
rights. An analysis of the democratic competences, as conceptualised within the CDC  
model, developed by the learners during the design of the leaflet, is provided in each

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3 category. The main democratic competences developed by the learners will be  
4 highlighted in italics in the three sub-sections and discussion that follow.  
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### 10 *1 Education about human rights*

11 Here I present empirical evidence to answer the first operational research question *what*  
12 *did the students learn?* during their Skype conversations, with particular reference to the  
13 cognitive aspect of their learning in terms of what kind of knowledge and values they  
14 developed. For their leaflet design, both Argentinian and UK-based students gained  
15 *knowledge and critical understanding of the world*, and in particular, of the ‘processes  
16 through which the mass media select, interpret and edit information before transmitting  
17 it for public consumption’ (CoE, 2016, p. 55). A number of photographs for the leaflets  
18 were considered and media censorship was identified as one of the ‘contemporary  
19 threats to democracy’ (CoE, 2016, p. 52). For example, some Argentinian students  
20 deliberated upon the fact that certain pictures shown around the world were not  
21 circulated in Argentina for fear of people being made to disappear. One Argentine  
22 student explained:  
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41 SILVANA: los medios argentinos no podían controlar lo que la prensa dijera en el resto  
42 del mundo [Argentine media could not control what the press said in the rest of the  
43 world].  
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48 In their scrutiny of images from other parts in the world revealing the human rights  
49 violations in Argentina, another Argentine student commented that:  
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54 MARÍA: está bueno ver que en otros países se mostraba la realidad, lo que estaba  
55 pasando acá, y que acá en nuestro país, eso no se podía ver’ [it is good to see that other  
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3 countries were showing the reality, what was happening here, and what here in our  
4  
5 country we could not see].  
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8 In the design of their leaflet, some British students chose the 1989 Hillsborough  
9  
10 Stadium Disaster in the UK as an example of a violation of human rights. This incident,  
11  
12 regarded as one of the world's worst football disasters, was primarily caused by the  
13  
14 police admitting more supporters into the stadium than the safe capacity, which resulted  
15  
16 in a human crush causing 96 deaths and hundreds of injuries (Hillsborough, 2012). In  
17  
18 their discussions, John, a British student, spoke about the police errors and explained  
19  
20 how 'Margaret Thatcher's government hid crucial documents to blame Liverpool  
21  
22 hooligans' so that she could lead people into believing that 'they were responsible for  
23  
24 the tragedy'.  
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28 As the project teams shared relevant and useful information that they had  
29  
30 found in the press, they developed essential democratic competences specified in the  
31  
32 CDC model – *knowledge and critical understanding of history and the value of justice*  
33  
34 (CoE, 2016, p. 54). For example, some British students critically examined the  
35  
36 allegation that Thatcher's government selected and constructed facts that became the  
37  
38 evidence of the narrative of the time leading to social injustice. As their discussions  
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40 progressed, students explained how past injustices can be dealt with peacefully in the  
41  
42 present. The Hillsborough Justice Campaign shop and a plaque with the names of those  
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44 who died in the stadium were mentioned as illustrations of how more recent British  
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46 governments have promoted a democratic culture in their society.  
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50 Learners examined and applied memories of the past to the present in the  
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52 hope that the future may be transformed and they explicitly highlighted the importance  
53  
54 of remembering the past as a way to prevent similar situations in the future. In this  
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56 respect, the CDC model specifies that 'understanding and interpreting the past in the  
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3 light of the present with a view to the future' (CoE, 2016, p. 54) is an important  
4 competence for a democratic culture. For example, Florencia, an Argentine student,  
5 discussed the role for formal education in this endeavour by saying 'I think by teaching  
6 children ... schools [...] It makes everybody aware'.  
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12 The role of education was valued as a way to promote a democratic culture,  
13 which for them meant teaching children about human rights, raising awareness in  
14 society and implementing topics such as this one in the school curriculum.  
15 Remembering the past through education in order to raise awareness in the local  
16 community in the present can be seen as a way of 'understanding the relevance of the  
17 past to concerns and issues in the contemporary world' (CoE, 2016, p. 54).  
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25 As the students described the savage violence and brutal cruelty as the  
26 backdrop of the 1978 World Cup, they recognised and valued fundamental freedoms  
27 such as *freedom of expression*. For example, Jeremías, an Argentine student, exclaimed:  
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34 JEREMÍAS: ...the main thing we were taught when we were little was that we don't  
35 have to be afraid of expressing what we think ... that is something that we learn in our  
36 generation.  
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41 These are all democratic competences in the CDC model, and from this perspective, the  
42 design of the leaflet provided the students with the forum for the examination of  
43 democratic peaceful ways of dealing with past injustices.  
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## 49 50 **2 *Education through human rights***

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52 Here I present empirical data to answer the second operational research question *how*  
53 *did the students learn?* as I searched for evidence of methods that developed skills for  
54 active citizenship. *Co-operation skills*, defined in the CDC model as 'skills that are  
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2  
3 required to participate successfully with others on shared activities, tasks and ventures’  
4  
5 (CoE, 2016, p. 49) were widespread in the data. The design of the leaflet provided the  
6  
7 platform for the students to express their views and opinions and to help each other with  
8  
9 their work. This can be gleaned in the frequent occurrences of questions and offers of  
10  
11 help such as:

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15  
16 KATIE: ¿Te parece bien eso? [...] Puedo hablar francés así que puedo traducir las otras  
17  
18 si quieres [Do you think this is a good idea? ... I can speak French so I can translate the  
19  
20 others if you wish] What do you think of this caption?  
21  
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23

24  
25 Project teams identified and set goals, for example Daniela said ‘we have to agree what  
26  
27 we are going to add in each space’ in the creation of their leaflet, and discussed ways in  
28  
29 which the information could be displayed and translated.

30  
31 Students used their *linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills* for the  
32  
33 benefit of their groups by translating picture captions from and into different languages  
34  
35 in their attempt to create a leaflet that showed the world’s perspective on the 1978  
36  
37 World Cup. For example, one project team explored the possibility of using images  
38  
39 from Brazil, France and Holland to show how the sporting event was viewed in these  
40  
41 countries. Given that the captions in these images were written in other languages, the  
42  
43 students discussed possible translations into English and Spanish and shared linguistic  
44  
45 expertise amongst the group members.

46  
47  
48 The online phase of the project allowed for the development of the students’  
49  
50 *autonomous learning skills*, defined in the CDC model as ‘skills that individuals require  
51  
52 to pursue, organise and evaluate their own learning, in accordance with their own needs,  
53  
54 in a self-directed and self-regulated manner, without being prompted by others’ (CoE,  
55  
56 2016, p. 44). These skills permeated the data as the students collaboratively made  
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3 decisions about the sporting event to juxtapose with the 1978 World Cup, the wording  
4 and the images for their leaflets. For instance, one project team explored the possibility  
5 of selecting the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing for their leaflet in order to address the  
6 allegation that China attempted to conceal human rights violations by not allowing open  
7 media access. Students compared the media coverage in Argentina and China during  
8 both sporting events to highlight media manipulation by governments involved in the  
9 violation of human rights and they then made decisions about the type of information  
10 that they needed to research.  
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21 Students identified gaps in their knowledge and understanding, as can be  
22 gleaned from these data:  
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27 VIVIANA: That's what we wanted to know [...] What we were wondering was what  
28 role the media played in that event [...] so we need to find information about how China  
29 covered the problem in the background.  
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35 They also located possible sources of information from their interactions with others in  
36 the group:  
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42 FRANK: Can you send me that list? [...] Maybe you can find more or less the same  
43 things for Beijing.  
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48 These skills are deemed to be important for a culture of democracy because 'they enable  
49 individuals to learn for themselves about, and how to deal with, political, civic and  
50 cultural issues using multiple and diverse sources both far and near' (CoE, 2016, p. 44).  
51 Similarly, students showed *flexibility and adaptability* to arrange to meet over Skype  
52 given the time difference and their own personal commitments.  
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3 Students' *active listening* permeated the data, as can be perceived in  
4  
5 Griselda's reformulation of a message being conveyed to her 'es decir, tomaron todo el  
6  
7 control' [that is to say, they took all the control]) and Ben's assurances of having  
8  
9 understood 'OK, yeah, I understand, honestly'. When there were language difficulties or  
10  
11 misunderstandings, students frequently facilitated comprehension by inferencing,  
12  
13 verifying, understanding and assisting comprehension. Students also helped each other  
14  
15 by providing lexical items as and when needed to aid both expression and  
16  
17 comprehension of messages:  
18

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22  
23 FERNANDA: The editor was fired. And he had to .... se tuvo que exiliar ... exilio ....  
24  
25 how do you call it?  
26

27  
28 LAURA: There was a sports newspaper that was called *El Gráfico* ... *El Gráfico* was  
29  
30 also 'intervenido'? ¿Cómo se dice 'intervenido'? [How do you say 'intervenido'?]  
31  
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33  
34 Under *linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills*, the CDC model refers to 'the  
35  
36 ability to manage breakdowns in communication, for example by requesting repetitions  
37  
38 or reformulations from others, or providing restatements, revisions or simplifications of  
39  
40 one's own misunderstood communications' (CoE, 2016, p. 49), and this is precisely  
41  
42 what we see here.  
43  
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### 45 46 47 48 **3 Education for human rights** 49

50 Here I present empirical data to answer the third operational research question *in what*  
51  
52 *ways were the students oriented towards action?*. I searched for evidence of  
53  
54 competences which were most likely to foster the application of human rights  
55  
56 knowledge to practice and to encourage learners to act in the face of injustices. All of  
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3 the students had in common that they were temporally removed from the events of the  
4 human rights violations of the Argentinian military dictatorship. Despite this, the  
5 experiences of the Argentinian and the UK-based students were substantially dissimilar.  
6  
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10 The latter group were also geographically removed from the events and less likely to  
11 have heard about them, unlike their Argentine project partners who had learnt about  
12 them through family, friends, the media and education.  
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15  
16 As a result of this, the emotional involvement was significantly different.  
17  
18 This can be evidenced in the fact that some Argentinian students highlighted the fact  
19 that social injustice was still present in their society. For example, Emilia and Victoria  
20 exclaimed 'it isn't over'; 'it happens every day'; 'this hasn't finished', whilst others  
21 acknowledged a lack of action to stand up for humanity, as can be gleaned from  
22 Eduardo's comments 'nobody does anything'; 'we're still repressed'. Argentinian  
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30 students became aware of the importance to discuss and act upon human rights issues.  
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32 Some UK-based students placed the disappearances, tortures and killings in  
33 Argentina in a global context and held the world accountable for these crimes against  
34 humanity. These students highlighted that the world, despite knowing, kept passive:  
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41 BRIONY: the rest of the world did still know [...] however, despite the fact that they did  
42 still know, they didn't want to say.  
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47 The allegation that the rest of the world knew but 'didn't want to say' is regarded as  
48 blameworthy and as bad as the Argentine media not transmitting 'what was really  
49 happening', as per the words of one of the Argentine students. Regardless of their  
50 nationalities, some of the students adopted a thoughtful approach towards the actions of  
51 the people in their respective societies during this period in history and reflected upon  
52 the consequences of remaining passive by not standing up for humanity. In this respect,  
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3 the CDC model identifies *moral responsibility* as a democratic attitude to be fostered,  
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5 which all students alike thought it important to take in their hands on behalf of those  
6  
7 who lacked the courage to take a principled stance at the time. Certain project teams  
8  
9 judged that this was morally wrong and decided to take action themselves by  
10  
11 highlighting this issue in their leaflet.

12  
13 Developing an attitude of *civic-mindedness*, in the sense of developing ‘feelings  
14  
15 of concern and care’ (CoE, 2016, p. 41) can be interpreted as a way to promote  
16  
17 orientation towards action. Civic-mindedness is linked to the skill of *empathy*. The CDC  
18  
19 model defines empathy as the ‘ability to step outside one’s own psychological frame of  
20  
21 reference (i.e. to decentre from one’s own perspective) and the ability to imaginatively  
22  
23 apprehend and understand the psychological frame of reference and perspective of  
24  
25 another person’ (CoE, 2016, p. 47).  
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30 This civic-minded attitude of being able to empathise with others can be  
31  
32 understood as an indicator that can trigger civic action. Findings in this study  
33  
34 demonstrate the students’ ability to apprehend and understand the feelings, emotions,  
35  
36 needs and perspectives of the victims. However, the data evidences challenges posed on  
37  
38 the ‘mind’ when students tried to ‘understand’ the reasons for the brutalities and  
39  
40 atrocities committed during this dark period in history. This type of understanding,  
41  
42 referred to in the CDC model as *cognitive self-awareness* (CoE, 2016, p. 51), was  
43  
44 shared by both UK-based and Argentinian students alike. For example, students  
45  
46 expressed great difficulty in understanding the motives underlying some of the political  
47  
48 ideas, stances and decisions of the time, as can be gleaned from this data:  
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52  
53 SANTIAGO: I’ve never understood why all this started ...

54  
55 KAREN: You can’t really understand ...  
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3 MARTINA: It's hard to wrap up your mind around the fact that people such as  
4  
5 yourself would support these ideas.  
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9 In this regard, the CDC model states that 'self-awareness and self-understanding are  
10 vital for participating effectively and appropriately in a culture of democracy' (CoE,  
11 2016, p. 51) and identifies *emotional self-awareness* of one's perspective on the world  
12 as an essential democratic competence.  
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18 Outrage was a key emotion in the data. For example, Marcela, an Argentine  
19 student sought a solidarity bond from Emma, her UK-based project partner by  
20 encouraging her to place herself in the shoes of the disappeared. Marcela asked 'How  
21 would you have felt if you, your family and friends had lived during those times of  
22 torture and disappearances?'. In her reply, Emma referred to feelings of anger and fear  
23 'I would have felt very angry with the government, but at the same time I think I would  
24 have felt fearful of what was going on around me'. Oxfam (1997, p.1) views learners  
25 motivated to take action when being 'outraged by social injustice', an emotion that  
26 permeated the data in this study as students expressed their belief that 'every individual  
27 human is entitled to fundamental freedoms and ought to be treated accordingly' (CoE,  
28 2016, p. 36) and that 'social justice ought to prevail' (CoE, 2016, p. 38).  
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## 43 **V Discussion**

### 44 45 46 ***1 Analysing competences developed during the project***

47 As indicated earlier, it is increasingly recognised that language teaching and learning  
48 should promote awareness of issues relating to HRE (Osborn, 2006; Osler & Starkey,  
49 2005; Yulita & Porto, 2017). With this in mind, here I discuss how successful the  
50 collaborative task of the leaflet design has been in achieving the goals of HRE through  
51 the lens of Article 2.2 of the UNDHRET and the CDC model. From a pedagogical point  
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3 of view, the CDC model served as a basis for evaluating the teaching, in particular the  
4 learning objectives of the leaflet design task. Not all the competences in the CDC were  
5 realised in the data, and those that were, were activated, mobilised and orchestrated as a  
6 cluster of competences, for as the model states, ‘in real-life situations, competences are  
7 rarely mobilised and used individually’ (CoE, 2016, p. 24).  
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12 The first component ‘education *about* human rights’ of Article 2.2 of the  
13 UNDHRET incorporates the dimension of knowledge and values with human rights-  
14 related content. Specifically in this study, the values manifested by the students during  
15 the design of the leaflet were expressed in the ways they applied, understood, related,  
16 explained and analysed knowledge. The CDC model makes a distinction between  
17 *knowledge* and *critical understanding*. Knowledge is described as the ‘body of  
18 information that is possessed by a person’ (CoE, 2016, p.51), whereas critical  
19 understanding involves comprehending, appreciating, evaluating, interpreting, and  
20 reflecting on that knowledge.  
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33 The term ‘critical’ in the CDC model is important. Porto and Byram (2015)  
34 analysed data from this same project, drawing on Barnett (1997), and found evidence of  
35 students’ development of critical skills, which led to engagement and action in their  
36 community. The link between *critical understanding of the world* and the *analytical and*  
37 *critical thinking skills* that the students applied in their Skype discussions is captured in  
38 the arguments they developed whilst selecting images for their leaflets. Learning to  
39 think critically is at the core of the CDC model as a way to eradicate extremism and to  
40 promote a culture of democracy. Learners shared knowledge and developed an  
41 understanding of ‘how media images are produced, and of the various possible motives,  
42 intentions and purposes of those who create and reproduce them’ (CoE, 2016, p. 55).  
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3 The second component ‘education *through* human rights’ of Article 2.2 of  
4 the UNDHRET comprises learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of  
5 educators and learners. In this study, the pedagogical approach allowed for  
6 participation, communication, engagement and interaction, where knowledge and  
7 critical understanding were democratised amongst students. The topic and the task were  
8 pre-determined, but not the specifics of the human rights-related content to be explored.  
9 Students had the freedom to express their own opinions through working with and  
10 listening to others, and offering help when needed. Similarly, they collaborated with  
11 each other to aid comprehension through a variety of strategies, such as simplifications,  
12 confirmations, reformulations and repetitions, and when gaps in language skills were  
13 noticed, help was provided by project partners. All these practices came from the  
14 students themselves, made possible and facilitated by the teachers/researchers.  
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30 The flexibility of this pedagogical strategy allowed for the collaborative creation  
31 of knowledge grounded in the students’ own experiences and interests. Neither the  
32 teachers nor the curriculum dictated the content, which emerged from the explorative  
33 and investigative dialogue the students engaged in. Students examined their own lives  
34 and those of others, looked critically at their own reality and benefitted from informal  
35 learning opportunities. These participatory, student-centred pedagogical practices are at  
36 the heart of democratic education (Dewey, 1916) and grounded in human rights  
37 principles.  
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48 The third component ‘education *for* human rights’ of Article 2.2 of the  
49 UNDHRET is oriented towards action and aims to foster an attitude of *civic-*  
50 *mindfulness*, defined in the CDC model as an attitude ‘towards a community or social  
51 group [...] that is larger than one’s immediate circle of family and friends and to which  
52 one feels a sense of belonging [...] and identification’ (CoE, 2016, p. 41). Civic-  
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3 mindedness is also understood in the CDC model as ‘an interest in, and attentiveness  
4 towards, the affairs and concerns of the community’, ‘a sense of solidarity with other  
5 people in the community’ and ‘a sense of civic duty’ (CoE, 2016, p. 41).  
6  
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8  
9 Specifically, education *for* human rights comprises the development of a  
10 sense of moral responsibility within students so that they feel compelled to act in the  
11 real world. It aims to develop awareness of human rights issues and to provoke students  
12 to take civic or political action to protect their own rights and those of others. For this to  
13 happen, it is necessary for students to develop a sense of ‘we-ness’ (Kemmis, 1990),  
14 which the design of the leaflet allowed for. This togetherness was evidenced in their  
15 willingness to co-operate by volunteering to take on tasks, such as translating picture  
16 captions and gathering information for the benefit of the transnational group, to which  
17 they temporarily had a sense of belonging. It was also demonstrated by skills like  
18 empathy, affective perspective-taking, cognitive and emotional self-awareness. That this  
19 then led to ‘action in the community’ in the spirit of citizenship education has been  
20 explored elsewhere (Porto & Byram, 2015; Yulita & Porto, 2017).  
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## 39 ***2 Using the empirical data to test the model***

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41 Considering the issue of whether the CDC model can account for all the empirical data,  
42 the analysis suggests a need to develop nuances in relation to fostering peace as a  
43 democratic value, particularly when topics relating to human rights violations are  
44 discussed. Research has argued that past trauma may be transmitted intergenerationally  
45 (Bowers & Yehuda, 2016; Barkan, 2000; Leen-Feldner, Feldner, Knapp, Bunaciu,  
46 Blumenthal & Amstadter, 2013; Yehuda, Daskalakis, Bierer, Bader, Klengel, Holsboer  
47 & Binder, 2016). This growing area of research suggests that children of traumatised  
48 individuals exposed to conflict may be a high-risk group of developing anger,  
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3 depression, aggression, revenge and hostility. Therefore, a potentially greater number of  
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5 people may require competences that may assist in the healing of trauma after violence.  
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8 Empirical studies (see for example Enright, Rhody, Litts & Klatt, 2014;  
9  
10 Shechtman, Wade & Khoury, 2009) have found that forgiveness education can be one  
11  
12 of the ways in which emotions relating to (post) trauma can be reduced and inner peace  
13  
14 promoted. These studies indicate that forgiveness can lead to improved psychological  
15  
16 well-being, better academic performance and reduced behavioural problems. Indeed, the  
17  
18 CDC model outlines competences that tangentially address the value of peace and  
19  
20 forgiveness, without explicitly including it as a democratic value. The inclusion of  
21  
22 peace as a value may prove a useful addition to the model to encourage practitioners to  
23  
24 address (post) trauma through education, thus mitigating against the perpetuation of  
25  
26 violence.  
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## 28 29 30 31 **VI Conclusion**

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35 This article reports on a pedagogical experiment that aimed to realise the two  
36  
37 participating universities' commitment to preparing learners as informed and engaged  
38  
39 global citizens, giving that commitment a particular international dimension distinctive  
40  
41 to the discipline of language teaching. The results in this study demonstrate that the  
42  
43 learners developed a set of democratic competences. The underlying intention of the  
44  
45 task of designing a leaflet was to nurture an attitude that would encourage them to take  
46  
47 action in their community, and students did indeed display a wide range of competences  
48  
49 of fundamental importance for the development of civic-mindedness. This study,  
50  
51 completed from an insider-practitioner perspective within the context of the learning  
52  
53 and teaching of foreign languages in higher education, examined data through the lens  
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55 of Article 2.2 of the UNDHRET and CDC model and at the same time served as a  
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3 proving ground for the CDC model. The research demonstrates that the online phase of  
4  
5 the project opened up a space to develop democratic competences as learners addressed  
6  
7 the profound sense of injustice they felt towards the crimes committed during the last  
8  
9 Argentinian military dictatorship.  
10

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17  
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19  
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21  
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24

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