



From Communication to Education: The Pedagogical Dimension of *Civil Dialogue*

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Sergio Sampedro-Martín*  
Daniel Schugurensky**  

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Abstract

This study focuses on the adaptation of a deliberative tool (*Civil Dialogue*) to the school world. While preserving respectful dialogue, attentive listening and mutual understanding, it moves from a communication logic that emphasizes authenticity and spontaneity to one that prioritizes the educational dimension of the process. *Civil Dialogue* is a structured deliberative technique on controversial topics that emerged as a response to growing polarization in political discourse, the media and social networks, and as an alternative to traditional confrontational debate. The *Gamified Civil Dialogue* consists of an oriented, guided and informed process that helps students in discourse-making, the recognition of different perspectives, teamwork and decision-making. Considering the educational context, we propose four variations to the original model: role-playing, research, group work and democratic participation. This proposal is relevant for teaching social studies and heritage education because controversial topics, the constructive approach to conflicts, deliberative processes, child and youth protagonism and gamification are becoming effective pedagogical strategies for citizenship education.

Keywords

dialogue; civic education; heritage education; controversial issues; gamification; initial teacher training

* Doctor, Universidad de Huelva, Centro de Investigación COIDESO, Universidad de Huelva. sergio.sampedro@ddi.uhu.es
** Profesor, School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University. dschugur@asu.edu

Da Comunicação à Educação: A Dimensão Pedagógica do Diálogo Civil

Resumo

Este estudo trata da adaptação de um dispositivo deliberativo (Civil Dialogue®) ao mundo escolar, preservando o diálogo respeitoso, a escuta atenta e a compreensão mútua, mas passando de uma lógica de comunicação que enfatiza a autenticidade e a espontaneidade, para uma que prioriza a dimensão educativa do processo. O Civil Dialogue® é uma técnica deliberativa estruturada sobre temas polêmicos que surgiu como resposta à crescente polarização na retórica política, na mídia e nas redes sociais, e como alternativa ao tradicional debate combativo e antagônico. O Diálogo Cívico Gamificado consiste num processo pedagogicamente orientado, guiado e informado que auxilia os alunos na construção de discursos, no reconhecimento de diferentes perspectivas, no trabalho em equipa e na tomada de decisões. Considerando o contexto educativo, propomos quatro variações ao modelo original: role-playing, investigação, trabalho em grupo e participação democrática. Esta proposta é relevante para o ensino das ciências sociais e da educação patrimonial porque os temas polêmicos, a abordagem construtiva dos conflitos, os processos deliberativos, o protagonismo infantil e juvenil e a gamificação estão se tornando estratégias pedagógicas eficazes para a formação cidadã.

Palavras-chave

diálogo; educação cidadã; educação patrimonial; questões controversas; gamificação; formação inicial de professores

De la comunicación a la educación: La dimensión pedagógica del Diálogo Civil

Resumen

Este estudio versa sobre la adaptación de un dispositivo deliberativo (Civil Dialogue®) al mundo escolar, conservando el diálogo respetuoso, la escucha atenta y el entendimiento mutuo, pero transitando de una lógica comunicacional que enfatiza la autenticidad y la espontaneidad, a una que prioriza la dimensión educativa del proceso. El Civil Dialogue® es una técnica deliberativa estructurada sobre temas controvertidos que surgió como respuesta a la creciente polarización en la retórica política, los medios de comunicación y las redes sociales, y como alternativa al debate tradicional combativo y antagónico. El Diálogo Cívico Gamificado consiste en un proceso orientado, guiado e informado que ayuda a los estudiantes en la construcción de discursos, el reconocimiento de perspectivas diferentes, el trabajo en equipo y la toma de decisiones. Considerando el contexto educativo, proponemos cuatro variaciones al modelo original: el juego de rol, la investigación, el trabajo en grupo y la participación democrática. Esta propuesta tiene relevancia para la didáctica de las ciencias sociales y la educación patrimonial porque los temas controvertidos, el abordaje constructivo de los conflictos, los procesos deliberativos, el protagonismo infanto-juvenil y la gamificación se están convirtiendo en estrategias pedagógicas eficaces para la educación ciudadana.

Palabras clave

diálogo; educación ciudadana; educación patrimonial; temas controvertidos; gamificación; formación inicial docente

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Introduction: Social Polarization and Civil Dialogue®

As polarization in society, politics, mass media and social media increases, people's dispositions and capacities to engage in productive conversations with those who hold different views decrease. This, in turn, leads to social isolation, sectarianism, mistrust, misunderstandings, conflicts and unwillingness to work together and find common ground, and in the long term contributes to the gradual erosion of democracy.

Civil Dialogue® is a deliberative group dynamic created in 2004 at the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at Arizona State University as a citizen response to these challenges, especially the decline in civil discourse. It is a structured debate on controversial (hot) topics in which participants take a position in relation to a provocative statement by sitting in five chairs arranged in a semicircle, presenting their ideas ranging from "totally agree" to "totally disagree" (Linde et al., 2014). The model is based on the premise that people with different perspectives can engage in productive communication and listen to each other in a climate of respect. Unlike the traditional debate format between two opposing positions (yes or no, for or against, black or white), Civil Dialogue® allows for the gray areas and is more of a conversation between peers than a confrontation between adversaries (Olson et al., 2013).

A Civil Dialogue® round includes a facilitator and the audience and typically lasts between 30 and 45 minutes. Although there are variations depending on the context, the process generally follows a sequence of pre-established steps that structure the deliberative exchange (Genette et al., 2018). These steps can be summarized as follows:

- The facilitator presents the controversy and the provocative statement.
- The audience, individually, silently reflects and takes a position on the controversy.
- Five volunteers from the audience with different views on the issue are invited to sit in the corresponding seats, on a sort of human Likert scale.
- The facilitator shares some basic civic rules of deliberation before beginning the dialogue.
- The five participants make a brief opening statement (2-3 minutes) to explain why they sat in each of the chairs arranged in the semicircle.
- Participants engage in dialogue among themselves.
- The audience makes comments and asks questions of the participants.
- Participants respond and make their final comments.

- The facilitator closes the dialogue by summarizing the main points of the discussion and reflecting on the process.

Some of the basic civic rules that the facilitator reminds the audience and participants of are using truthful and authentic speech, not attacking other participants or audience members, listening attentively and respectfully, using their own words, and avoiding slogans and catchphrases (Sampedro-Martín, 2023). Overall, Civil Dialogue® provides a process for respectful civic deliberation on relevant issues of our time, promotes active listening, authenticity, and feedback, avoids framing conversations as win-lose arguments, and encourages participants to disagree without using demonizing language (Linde et al., 2014; Razzante, 2019). Civil Dialogue® has been used in many settings to consider issues such as taxes, abortion, gay marriage, marijuana criminalization, war, free speech, gun control, elections, race relations, and immigration, among others. It is not a popularity contest or an attack-defense interaction between two parties. It is about familiarizing the public with the notion that citizens can hold different points of view and express disagreements without demonizing the opposition. The aim of Civil Dialogue® is that citizens become ‘civic communicators’, adopting certain dispositions such as being honest, being multi-present, becoming aware of communication styles, linguistic choices and changes of opinion, taking responsibility, and accepting disagreements (Genette et al. 2017; 2018; Razzante et al., 2020).

Gamification: Role-Playing Games in Education

Gamification is the use of game design elements in non-playful contexts (Deterding et al. 2021). In recent decades, the implementation of new pedagogical techniques related to gamification has increased in which relationships are established between the environment and the players on the one hand, and between the participants on the other. When human beings play, they relate to others, communicate and learn. Hence, gamification can make education an immersive learning experience, generating feelings of commitment, effort and dedication among students (Huizinga, 1972; Perrota et al. 2013; Sampedro-Martín, 2023). Gamification helps participants to express their emotions, have new experiences, have a good time, relax and find solutions to problems and challenges. For these reasons, it is advisable to incorporate these strategies in teacher education and in schools (Alajaji & Alshwiah, 2021; Edo, 2023).

One of these strategies is role-playing, which consists of a collective exercise in which participants adopt roles and create or recreate stories (Brell, 2006). Role-playing allows for an empathetic understanding of reality, and its structure implicitly involves group work and interaction among peers, generating creative situations that constitute a means of acquiring knowledge (Sampedro-Martín & Estepa, 2022; Wesselow & Stoll, 2018). Roda (2010) distinguishes four modalities and four settings of role-playing that provide multiple combinations for implementing it in the classroom. The modalities are the live role-playing game, the tabletop role-playing game, the written role-playing game, and the role-playing videogame. These modalities can be set in the real world, in the altered real world, in fictional worlds based on previous works, or in fictional worlds designed exclusively for the game. The resources offered by role-playing games are very broad and varied. For example, to work on the story we could use a real setting, for literature the recreation of previous works, and for imagination fictional worlds (Cook, 2014; Shih et al., 2010).

Role-playing games are useful for fostering values such as cooperation, tolerance and empathy in children. When we place them in the game, we put them in the shoes of another, making them coexist, cooperate or interpret other cultures and ethnicities, past or present. Role-playing games also stimulate reading and oral expression, which in turn increases vocabulary and expressive abilities of participants. In role-playing games, participants become familiar with other perspectives, values and interpretations of reality, helping them to reflect on their own assumptions and become more critical thinkers. In short, role-playing games allow the development of reading and writing skills, social interaction, imagination, critical thinking and empathy (Guerrero Recalde et al., 2012; Wesselow & Stoll, 2018; Zelaieta et al., 2019). Prior research on role-playing games tends to value their educational impact. As a teaching strategy, it allows teachers to convert information into knowledge and helps students to adapt to ever-changing environments and to information overload (Grande-de-Prado et al., 2020; Sampedro-Martín & Estepa, 2022).

Controversies in Heritage Education

Since the Faro Convention of 2005, the principles established by the Council of Europe (n.d.), recommend addressing controversial issues to educate informed, critical and engaged citizens (González-Monfort, 2019; Estepa et al., 2021). This highlights the importance of heritage education on socially conflictive issues as an articulating element for eco-social development and transformation (González-Reyes, 2018; Fontal et al., 2021).

In this work, we understand heritage as a sociocultural fact constituted, in a holistic way, by various historical, artistic, ethnological, scientific-technological and environmental manifestations (Estepa, 2013; Jiménez-Pérez et al., 2010; Vázquez-Bernal et al., 2021). Heritage education, in turn, promotes a comprehensive knowledge of past and contemporary societies, giving rise to social identity structures that become cultural symbols and help develop intercultural perspectives (Arroyo & Cuenca, 2021; Cuenca et al., 2017; Ibagón & Miralles, 2021). Heritage education has established itself as an impactful pedagogical intervention connecting heritage and people, and it encompasses not only formal education, but all aspects of life in which heritage is present (Fontal et al., 2021).

Pedagogical work with controversial issues and interactive methods encourages critical positioning, participation and the construction of an argument that considers different experiences and viewpoints. If the work is continuous, it can contribute to the development of citizens who are open to dialogue, respectful of diversity, willing to build bridges with those who think differently and committed to democracy (Llancavil et al., 2023; Delgado-Algarra et al. 2024). Social studies constitute propitious subjects to address controversial issues (Martín-Cáceres et al., 2021). Hence, it is important that social studies teachers acquire competencies to develop innovative and experiential classroom activities that promote critical thinking, decision-making and argumentation based on innovative and experiential methodologies that use games to address controversial issues in playful, dialogical and safe environments (Cuenca et al., 2021; Delgado-Algarra et al., 2024; Estepa, 2019b; Pineda et al., 2017; Sampedro-Martín et al., 2023a; Santisteban, 2019). To this end, we propose a teacher training model that integrates research, personal experiences and theoretical knowledge about classroom practice (Pagès, 2019; Estepa, 2019b). Within this framework, gamification can contribute to improving initial teacher training (Sampedro-Martín et al., 2023b).

The EPITEC Project

To contextualize our pedagogical approach, it is pertinent to briefly describe the research activities of the EPITEC Project (acronym for Heritage Education for Territorial and Emotional Intelligence of Citizens), coordinated by the University of Huelva (Andalusia, Spain) in collaboration with other universities. The research carried out under the first EPITEC Project² was shaped by a triple

² R+D+i project "Heritage Education for the Territorial and Emotional Intelligence of Citizenship. Analysis of good practices, design and intervention in compulsory education (EPITEC)" (EDU2015- 67953-P). Funding body:

pedagogical perspective that included controversial topics, relevant social problems and an eco—social approach. This triple perspective materialized in controversial heritages (Cuenca, 2023; Estepa et al., 2021).

The EPITEC2 Project³ focuses on controversial topics, exploring how they manifest material and immaterial (intangible) heritage, and how they can be addressed in education. From a pedagogical perspective, exploring a controversial heritage from different perspectives can help students to develop argumentative competencies and critical thinking skills. The goal is to nurture critical heritage literacy, especially to promote education for sustainable development and citizenship education that align with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (Sampedro-Martín et al., 2023a; Schugurensky, 2018).

In this context, a controversial heritage refers to historical, cultural, social, political or environmental issues that are disputed due to conflicting perspectives or values. Our project focuses on cases that have pedagogical potential, especially those in which one perspective is hegemonic and the other is forgotten or silenced (Arroyo et al., 2022; Estepa et al., 2021; Sampedro-Martín et al., 2023a). Examples of controversial heritages include cultural practices (e.g. bullfighting), historical events (the ‘discovery’ of America, the legacy of colonialism, Franco’s dictatorship), places (e.g. a sacred mountain with rare minerals) as well as monuments, statues and street names that generate positive and negative reactions in the population. Controversial heritages can be classified according to the controversial heritage perspective from which they are approached (Table 1).

Table 1:
Definitions of the perspectives included in controversial heritages

Perspective	Definition
Anti-heritage	Elements that represent counter-values (war atrocities, persecutions, repressions, human rights violations, environmental degradation, etc.)
Heritage of cruelty	Customs that are part of cultural tradition that include physical or psychological violence on people or animals
Interested heritage	Heritage management and conservation where conflicts arise between political, ideological, cultural, economic, ecological or social logics
Heritage with a gender perspective	Critical re-reading of heritage that reproduces sociocultural patterns loaded with prejudices that are based on gender hierarchies and stereotypes

MINECO/FEDER. 2016–2020. I.P.: José María Cuenca López and Jesús Estepa Giménez (University of Huelva). Funding 37.200 €.

³ R+D+i project “Controversial heritages for the ecosocial formation of citizenship. An investigation of heritage education in formal education (EPITEC2)” (PID2020-116662GB-I00). Funding body: MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033. I.P.: José María Cuenca López and Myriam J. Martín-Cáceres (University of Huelva). Funding: 41.624 €.

Inclusive heritage	Critical re-reading of accessibility to heritage to address diversity, seeking inclusion and integration of heritage elements that represent multiculturalism and social plurality
Heritage subjugated-rescued	Awareness raising about heritage that has been subjugated, persecuted or silenced by the dominant culture that has been
Heritage in transition	Heritage adapted to current social or economic demands, be it negative (commodification) or positive (valorization)

Note: Adaptation based on recent research from the EPITEC2 Project (Arroyo et al., 2022; Estepa et al., 2021; Sampedro-Martín et al., 2023a; 2025).

Working on controversial issues in schools has many challenges. In the context of the EPITEC2 Project, this raises two questions: To what extent are future teachers prepared to meet some of these challenges? To what extent do teacher education programs help them to understand the historical background of current conflicts and to develop pedagogical skills and strategies for teaching controversial issues?

Inspired by the framework proposed by Pace (2021), the EPITEC2 Project on educational work on controversial heritage adopted eight elements for creating effective lesson plans and reflective practice for teaching controversial topics:

- Cultivate a supportive environment through community-building norms.
- Prepare thoroughly by paying attention to student identity and development, teaching contexts, subject matter, purposes, and methods.
- Reflect on the teacher's position, including his or her pedagogical functions, his or her position on problems, and the pros and cons of disclosing his or her views.
- Proactively communicate with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators about topics to be studied.
- Select authentic topics and ask questions that encourage student engagement and inquiry, moving from cold to hot topics.
- Choose resources and pedagogies that challenge assumptions, include diverse voices and perspectives, and encourage participation.
- Guide the discussion with tools to analyze sources, exchange ideas, move from small groups to the whole group, and attend to equity.
- Address emotions by creating space to process them, using de-escalation maneuvers when necessary, and developing self-awareness.

The selection of controversial topics for classroom activities is guided by the three criteria advanced by Kerr and Huddleston (2016): a) importance of the issue

in society, b) salient debates as part of the democratic process, and c) potential to promote critical and analytical thinking and to address relevant issues of the present. To this, we would add a fourth criterion: the age appropriateness of the controversy. For instance, some controversial topics that are appropriate for teacher education or high school students may not be appropriate for elementary school children.

The Pedagogical Dimension of Civil Dialogue

In the United States, Civil Dialogue® is primarily used in community or university settings with an adult population. However, the creators of this model have noted that it is possible to use it in schools with children and adolescents (Genette et al., 2017). From our perspective, this requires a shift from a communicational logic to one that considers the educational dimension of the process. Because Civil Dialogue® emerged at a school of human communication, it is not surprising that the central concern of its creators was (and still is) to improve communication by promoting effective deliberative processes. This means following the rules of good dialogue (attentive listening, mutual respect, etc.) but also making participation as authentic and spontaneous as possible (Olson et al., 2018a).

Authenticity implies that participants are encouraged to express their own opinion, feelings, and personal positions on the controversy. Spontaneity implies that participants must react immediately to the provocative statement. The former excludes role-playing, the latter prior preparation. Even more: from the communication perspective of the original creators, a key goal of Civil Dialogue is that individuals manage to express themselves freely and listen respectfully to the other participants. In other words, it is about promoting free expression and interpersonal communication. Hence, any activities related to teamwork, agreement-seeking, or proposals for collective action would exceed its objectives.

In addition to adapting the topics, content, and process to the age of the participants, an emphasis on the pedagogical dimension of the process, especially in primary schools, invites us to reconsider these three aspects, use gamified activities and train teachers as facilitators (Sampedro-Martín et al., 2023b; Sampedro-Martín & Martín-Cáceres, 2023). It is important to note that we are not suggesting that the pedagogical perspective is better than the communicational one, or that our proposed model is superior to the original one. It is simply an adaptation of the tool to an educational context, to be implemented in the teacher education programs and in school practice. Although the two models are based on different disciplinary approaches, have different emphases, and involve

different participants, both aim to contribute to the construction of better citizens through a deliberative process based on dialogue.

From Communication to Education: Four Variations of the Original Model

Our adaptation of the Civil Dialogue® tool to the field of education consists of four changes to the original model: role-playing, research, group work, and democratic participation. The new educational strategy, the Gamified Civic Dialogue, provides experiential learning opportunities to address controversial topics.

First Variation: Role-Playing

The first variation that we propose to the original model for classroom work is to randomly assign roles to students, regardless of their point of view on the controversial issue proposed by the teacher. Thus, students would be positioned on a scale of 1 to 5 in a completely random manner. This variation of the original model has two rationales. The first is that children are more sensitive to the opinions of peers and adults, and if they have an 'unpopular' or 'politically incorrect' position on a social issue, they will feel inhibited and reluctant to express their opinion, or they would be exposed to the ridicule of their peers for several weeks or months (Noddings & Brooks, 2017). The second reason is that through role-playing students learn to understand -through their own experience- other points of view that may arise with respect to a specific issue. By putting themselves in the shoes of others, students could develop greater empathy and become more aware of different perspectives (Martín-Cáceres et al., 2021). By becoming familiar with the diversity of arguments on a social problem, students could more clearly define their own point of view, revise some of their arguments, or even change their minds. They also become used to engaging in challenging conversations that challenge their assumptions.

Second Variation: Research

The second variation derives from the previous one, since it would be difficult for students to defend a point of view that is unknown. Therefore, our proposal includes assigning roles several sessions in advance so that students can begin an inquiry and gather information to build arguments related to their randomly assigned perspectives. Incorporating student research into our model aligns with active teaching-learning processes in social studies (Cuenca et al., 2021; Estepa,

2019a). We recognize that this variation may reduce spontaneity in the exchange of ideas with respect to the original model, but what is lost in spontaneity is likely to be gained in the development of competencies to investigate and organize arguments.

Third Variation: Group Work

The third variation from the original model is group work. In the original format, each person in the room reflects silently for a few minutes on the controversial statement shared by the facilitator, and then five individuals volunteer to occupy the five chairs (Genette et al., 2017). In our proposal, students are randomly grouped into five teams two or three weeks before the dialogue takes place, as proposed in a previous study (Sampedro-Martín & Martín-Cáceres, 2023). For example, in a classroom of 20 students, five groups of four members per group would be formed. The groups prepare their arguments on the controversy, and on the day of the dialogue, they choose a spokesperson to represent them in the semicircle. An 'assistant' to the spokesperson who stands behind the chair and provides help in the form of whispering, can also be added.

Fourth Variation: Participatory Democracy

The most important feature of the original Civil Dialogue® model is the deliberative process itself. Concerned about increasing polarization and social media echo-chambers, the aspiration of our colleagues in the communication department is that citizens learn to dialogue about important issues in a respectful way and can listen to other points of view in order to draw our own conclusions. If participants wish to take individual or collective actions, it is their personal prerogative, but it is not part of Civil Dialogue®. Its focus is on fostering an informed, critical and deliberative citizenry (Olson et al., 2018b). Our pedagogical proposal shares these goals but also includes the development of participatory citizens oriented towards the preservation of Human Rights and the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, in our proposal, the dialogue is followed up by a democratic process that ends in some type of solution-oriented agreement. Thus, from a perspective that promotes agency, students develop capacities and dispositions to reach consensus and influence the surrounding reality, and through this process learn democracy by doing (Bartlett & Schugurensky, 2021). The specifics of this action will depend on the age of the students and the context and can range from writing a letter to decision-makers to organizing a campaign to change a rule, a law, or to change the name of a street or a square in the neighborhood.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Inspired by the Civil Dialogue® model created at Arizona State University (Genette et al., 2017), we proposed an adaptation of a communication approach to educational contexts by considering pedagogical principles and objectives. While we retain the central idea (a deliberation with five perspectives on a controversial statement), our model includes a 'before' and 'after' the civic dialogue session, and recommends four variations for classroom work: gamification, research, group work, and action-oriented democratic decision-making. With these four changes, our intention is to maintain the spirit of the original model centered on communication while maximizing its pedagogical impact.

First, in our proposal gamification takes the form of a roleplay in which roles are randomly assigned. While role-playing can limit the authenticity of the original model, it can also increase empathy, trust, and motivation. Since in role-playing the position that students take does not necessarily correspond to what they think, they must learn to put themselves in other people's shoes and assume a different role (Wesselow & Stoll, 2018; Crujeiras et al., 2020). In addition, role-playing protects students who have unpopular opinions, avoiding self-censorship or censorship (explicit or implicit) from their peers or teachers, who must consider students' levels of abstraction or their capacity to elaborate a persuasive argument according to their age (Chomsky, 2005).

Second, we acknowledge that if students conduct research and prepare their interventions in advance, the dialogue session may lose some degree of spontaneity. At the same time, from a pedagogical standpoint, students would have the opportunity to approach different controversial issues from a variety of perspectives, including some that may disagree with their own positions. This would allow them, among other things, to identify reliable sources of information, detect 'fake news', evaluate the quality of the arguments, and review their own assumptions. In some cases, it would also help them to understand how hate speech is constructed. Altogether, these activities would contribute to the development of critical and divergent thinking (Sampedro-Martín & Martín-Cáceres, 2023; Tamayo-Alzate, 2012; Vivero-Gamarra et al., 2023).

Third, while the original model emphasizes individual opinions, our proposal values team work as part of pedagogical approaches that promote problem-based and project-based learning (Molina-Torres, 2022; Narváez-Palacios & Gutiérrez-Avendaño, 2023). When students work in small groups they can put into action practices of cooperation, responsibility, mutual listening and conflict resolution. At the same time, the use of their associative intelligence productively would

allow them to generate better ideas arguments than the sum of individual arguments.

Fourth, our proposal includes a post-dialogue phase in which students, after having been exposed to different perspectives and arguments, engage in a democratic process to decide on an action (or a plan of actions) that contributes to solving the problem. Students would reach this decision by voting, and ideally by consensus. This stage gives continuity to the process and allows the teaching-learning exercise to end with a collective action that makes a positive difference. This experience of participatory democracy contributes to nurturing democratic citizens who consider different points of view, learn to live together in a climate of tolerance, and are committed to improving society and the environment (Arroyo et al., 2022; Pagès, 2019).

As mentioned above; in adapting the communication logic of the original Civil Dialogue® to the educational world, our proposal faces several challenges, including possible decreases in authenticity, spontaneity and active listening. Acknowledging these concerns, we would like to suggest a few strategies and practical recommendations to mitigate them. To begin with, the challenge of authenticity may arise because in the role-play students do not necessarily use their own voice, as they must represent the position that was randomly assigned to them (which could coincide or not with theirs). To counteract this problem, in our proposal students can express their own voice during the participatory democracy phase in which they formulate proposals for change.

Secondly, research and prior preparation can limit students' spontaneity at the time of dialogue. To address this challenge, in our proposal the teacher in his role as facilitator can ask questions 'off script' based on the arguments that arise and inquire about students' emotions regarding the controversial issue (e.g. feelings of sadness, hope, fear, joy, frustration, etc.). With empathy and a caring attitude, in these interactions the teacher can motivate students to express themselves naturally and share those feelings.

Thirdly, active listening, a central element of deliberative processes, can be affected if students are focused on presenting the research they have conducted and using the data they have collected to justify their arguments. To minimize this situation (which could also appear in the original Civil Dialogue®), the teacher could intervene just when some students ask to speak and request them to summarize the previous participant's argument before responding.

To assist teachers overcome these and other challenges, we recommend incorporating Civic Dialogue (both the original and the Gamified version) in teacher education programs.

Topics could range from the legacy of the 'discovery' of the Americas to bullfighting and animal rights to different variations of ethical dilemmas. By

experiencing the process as participants themselves, future teachers would be better prepared to implement it successfully in schools when they have an opportunity to connect it to the curriculum. Furthermore, in the case of initial teacher education, the analysis of controversial issues using interactive approaches can promote deliberative competencies, democratic attitudes and critical thinking among university students. This is particularly relevant to social studies teaching, which aims at nurturing informed, critical, engaged and caring citizens.

In summary, our Gamified Civic Dialogue proposal consists of an oriented, guided and informed process that can help students in the analysis and construction of discourses, the recognition of different perspectives, teamwork, and decision-making skills. We consider that this proposal has potential for social studies teaching and heritage education because past and present controversial issues, the constructive approach to conflicts, deliberative processes, student engagement and gamification are becoming increasingly recognized as effective pedagogical strategies.

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