

# Online Interactions in Higher Education for the Development of Intercultural Communication

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# Abstract

Intercultural communication is an important dimension of foreign and additional language teaching, and online interactions play an important role in shaping cultural learning and e-learning in global contexts (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2013). College students around the World united by English is an example of a telecollaborative project which integrates intercultural dialogues in English classes. In 2015, university English learners in three countries - Portugal, Canada and the United Arab Emirates - were invited to interact with each other, share aspects of their culture and explore other cultures while using English. This telecollaboration included two online platforms: Edmodo, where learners regularly posted videos and audio files, and Google Drive, which hosted two questionnaires that encouraged learners to reflect on intercultural dialogues. The online platforms provided students with unique opportunities to develop intercultural communication, crossing geographical barriers.

# Objectives

### Linguistic and communicative competences

- to develop speaking, writing and listening skills in the English language;
- to develop literacy skills on the basis of film, pictures and written texts.

#### Digital competences

- to communicate in digital environments;
- to share resources through online tools;
- to link with others and collaborate through digital tools;
- to interact with and participate in communities and networks.

#### **Learning competences**

- to develop research strategies;
- to develop independent work strategies;
- to collaborate in pair work and group work;
- to promote tandem learning.

#### Intercultural competences

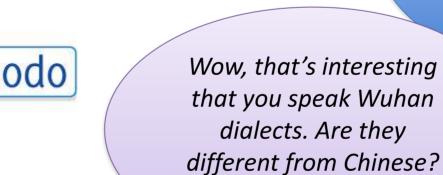
- to create opportunities for intercultural communication;
- to promote attitudes of respect of different cultures;
- to develop strategies of openness to language and cultural diversity.







Edmodo – online platform



Hello everyone. I talk about culture of my hometown-Wuhan, in China. Also, I introduce the mid-autumn festival

> How interesting! Can you tell me the name of the dialects? Are some of them endangered or has the government made sure they survive?



A Framework for Developing and Understanding Digital Competence in Europe.\*

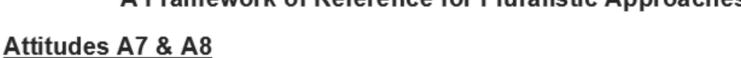




#### Competences

- 2.1 Interacting through technologies
- 2.2 Sharing information and content
- 2.3 Engaging in online citizenship
- 2.4 Collaborating through digital channels
- 2.5 Netiquette
- 2.6 Managing digital identity

# A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches.\*





**CARAP (2012)** 



#### Competences

Understanding linguistic and cultural differences;

Access to language and culture;

Thanks for your video.

Awareness of different attitudes;

Clarification of misunderstandings;

Recognizing and valuing 'otherness'.

# Limitations

#### Time-consuming;

Groups for different genders: male and female;

Limited participation of some students;

Challenge to fit the project into the school agenda;

Voluntary participation.

## \*References

Candelier, M. et al. (2012). CARAP-FREPA: A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches. Council of Europe.

Dooly, M. & O'Dowd, R. (Eds.) (2012). Researching online foreign language interaction and exchange: theories, methods, and challenges. Bern: Peter Lang.

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