

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.

Learning competences

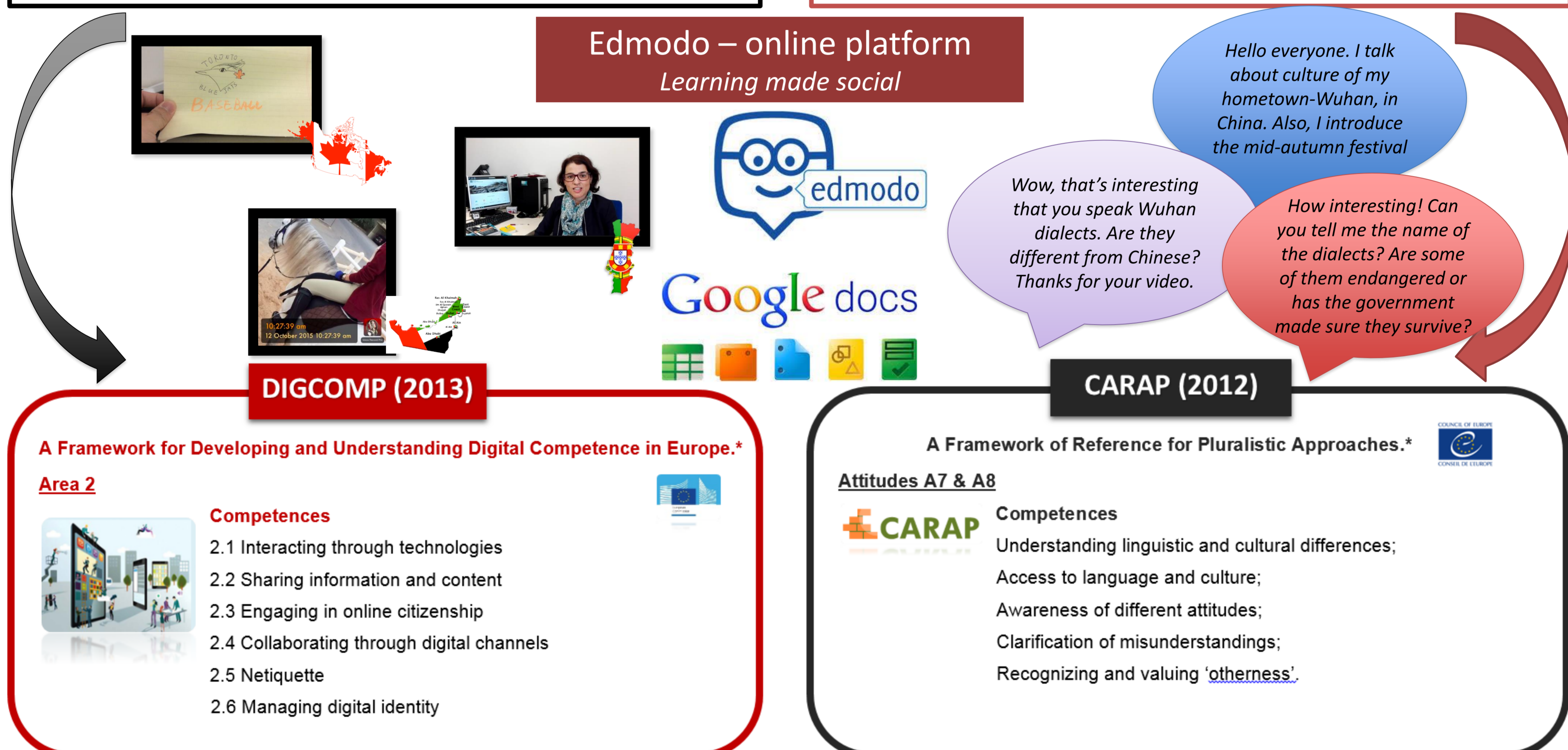
- to develop research strategies;
- to develop independent work strategies;
- to collaborate in pair work and group work;
- to promote *tandem learning*.

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.

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.



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

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