

Module 1: ICT

Extended Module – English

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the extended version of the first module, called “The role of ICT in language learning”, which was created by Laura and Cristina. In this module, we will provide you with further knowledge about the current trends of ICT tools in education.

Getting to know the ICTs would not be enough for a secondary education teacher to elaborate their own material, since designing activities using ICT tools in education is also crucial for fostering effective language acquisition while working on inclusion, peer-assessment, digital competence, or implementing current teaching methods and techniques.

However, these activities could be elaborated in an isolated way, or they could be orientated to our **European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu)**, which is the official framework in Europe for this field of study, and also up-to-date on new educational trends. Therefore, in order to create quality and prevailing activities using ICTs addressed to language acquisition, we might strive to align our activities with the **6 areas** of DigCompEdu: professional engagement, digital resources, teaching and learning, assessment, empowering learners, and facilitating learners’ digital competence (Redecker, 2017). This not only promotes interactive and personalized learning experiences, improves accessibility to diverse linguistic resources, or enables innovative assessment methods, but also empowers students to work on critical thinking, to develop digital and linguistic skills, or to broaden their knowledge and intercultural values, preparing them for the demands of the XXI century (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016; Passey, 2021).

In this extended module we will recall and expand the advantages and disadvantages of using ICT tools in the classroom, and we will review the 6 different areas of digital competence according to the European framework. To do so, we will continue taking Ms. López’ practical example as a case study for this module too.

Approaching ICTs as novelty or anxiety: the case of Ms. López

Remember Ms. López, a 43-year-old secondary education teacher that teaches English as a foreign language to a group of 24 students, who always seem bored in class. Ms. López has taken a course, and now knows about the ICT concept, its implications on applied linguistics, and the use of ICT tools in a responsible manner for secondary education, taking into account the European perspective for a proper use and development of the digital competence in education.

Since she would like to design several activities to be included in her teaching units, so that her students use digital devices in the classroom while they develop their language skills, now she would like to take further steps with her ICTs use in class.

Let us see how we can help Ms. López design these kinds of activities.

2. Recalling and extending ITC's pros & cons

As we talked about in the Basic Module, language activity can largely be carried out through technological means, which serve as support for the oral and written texts that students may see, listen, comprehend, and produce. Hence, digital competence should be understood as an accompaniment to students' communicative competence. Also, the use of ICT tools impact the way in which second languages are taught and learned, as these tools enhance and favour access to diverse material. Thanks to this easy access to content and materials, students can be stimulated to learn individually or with others and to develop different language skills.

Within the educational field, we can define ITCs as didactic and instrumental resources that can be used with the purpose of managing, administrating and organising the classroom, but they also encourage students to communicate, to mediate in that communication, and to foster the construction of knowledge (Salmerón et al., 2010). Moreover, ICTs are tools that help educators to control traditional space-time barriers thanks to the virtual teaching platforms, which allow students and teachers to not attend the classroom physically (Herrada, 2018; Maraza, 2016), or to make the most of the activities carried out in person due to their ability to facilitate obtaining, analysing and organising information through virtual means (Cakici, 2016).

This way, when ICTs are integrated in the classroom, students not only are given the chance to get in touch with different kind of media, but also they need to decide how they will manage them, what type of skills they will be using, what kind of applications they prefer, how to plan and solve issues or how they will cope with problems arising from those activities, etc.

According to Bonilla (2014), there are some specific advantages and disadvantages of working ICTs in the classroom, which are described in the following tables:

Table 1. *Advantages of the ICTs use in the class.*

Advantages	Description
Motivation	Motivation plays an essential role in teachers' preparation of activities and material, and it has a great influence on their performance in class. Motivation is also essential in students'

	engagement, participation, and enjoyment.
Create an IT (Information Technology) background	Students could be taught with different pedagogical methods when they have a digital background. This is a special useful resource for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), as it provides them with different methods to learn in an easier and more fun way (Gutiérrez, 2012).
Interest	Students show interest in learning new content when they feel attracted by certain digital tools.
Interactivity, initiative and creativity	Students can interact, communicate, or exchange experiences with other students in the classroom through digital tools, which greatly enriches their learning. It all fosters their imagination and self-directed learning.
Cooperation	ICT also makes it possible, and sometimes easier, to carry out collaborative experiences, work or projects together.
Autonomy	Students have countless channels and a large amount of information at their disposal. Although there's a need to spend time learning how to use any given ICT tool, students can be more autonomous in searching for such information.

Note. Bonilla (2014).

Reflect:

- Can you add two more advantages to this list that are anecdotal for you (from your experience)?

Therefore, we find many advantages in the use of ICTs. We point out that ICTs allow students to explore language more creatively and they provide them the opportunity to access and organise information in different ways. Regarding disadvantages, there are also some important ideas to be considered:

Table 2. *Disadvantages of the ICTs use in the class.*

Disadvantages	Description
High cost	Classrooms need to be adapted to ICTs for educators to effectively use them. Sometimes, high cost is an important characteristic and disadvantage that conditions the use of ICTs to teach.
Loss of writing and effort	Excessive use of technology can lead to disuse of traditional writing skills, and students may stop practicing their own basic skills.
Distraction	ICTs may lead to student's distraction because of their motivation or interest in the tool rather than in the content that it's being taught with those tools. On the other hand, tools used through general access to the Internet can result in numerous distractions.
Time	Searching for a given piece of information in numerous sources takes time. Therefore, educators should be aware of how much time their students could spend on the activities, and if the time of exposure in front of a screen could be harmful for them.
Reliability of information	Educators should distinguish and make their students discriminate between useful and useless information, since not all of the information that appears on the Internet is reliable.
Isolation	The constant use of IT tools in the daily life of students isolates them from other forms of face-to-face communication, which are fundamental to their social and educational development.

Note. Bonilla (2014).

Reflect:

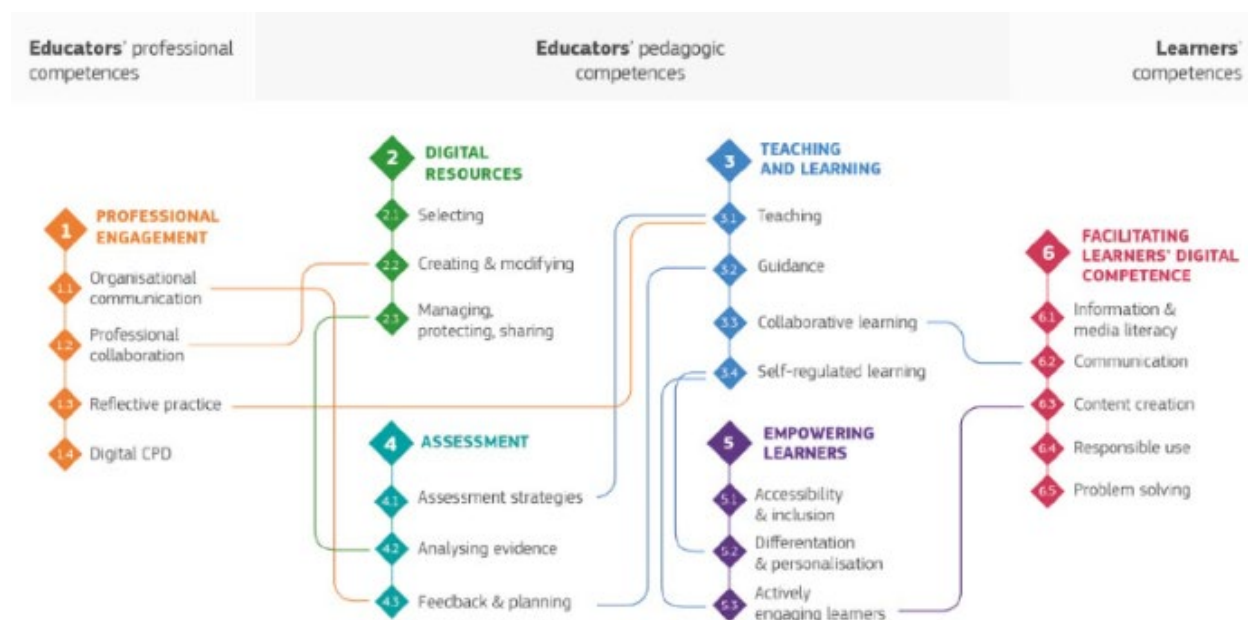
- Can you add two more DISadvantages to this list that are anecdotal for you (from your experience)?

All in all, the integration of ICT in foreign language education offers numerous advantages that enhance the learning experience. From providing interactive resources and fostering collaborative learning environments to supporting personalized instruction and facilitating continuous assessment, ICT plays a pivotal role in modern language learning. As educational technologies continue to evolve, it is imperative for educators to leverage these tools effectively, ensuring that learners can fully benefit from the opportunities that ICT presents. The ongoing research and development in this field promise to further enrich language education, making it more accessible, engaging, and effective for learners worldwide.

3. How competent are we in digital tools for education?

Following the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu), there are three kinds of competences that should be addressed by educators when we talk about their digital competency: **(a) educators' professional competences**, which are those related to the professional engagement, **(b) educators' pedagogic competences**, which are those related to the pedagogic process, and **(c) learners' competences**, which are those related to the students digital competence. From these three competences, DigCompEdu proposes 6 areas to develop all of them, and these are summarised this way:

Figure 1. *DigCompEdu competences and their connections.*



Note. DigCompEdu (Redecker, 2017).

Moreover, and before plunging into the task of working with ICTs directly, we also must say that an educator should be aware of their digital competency levels. This way, you could adapt ICT tools to you as much as to your students, so both parts involved in the teaching and learning process feel comfortable with it. In this module, we follow the assessment chart of the IDEAL project, where levels range from A1 to C2, according to DigCompEdu.

Figure 2. *DigCompEdu progression model.*

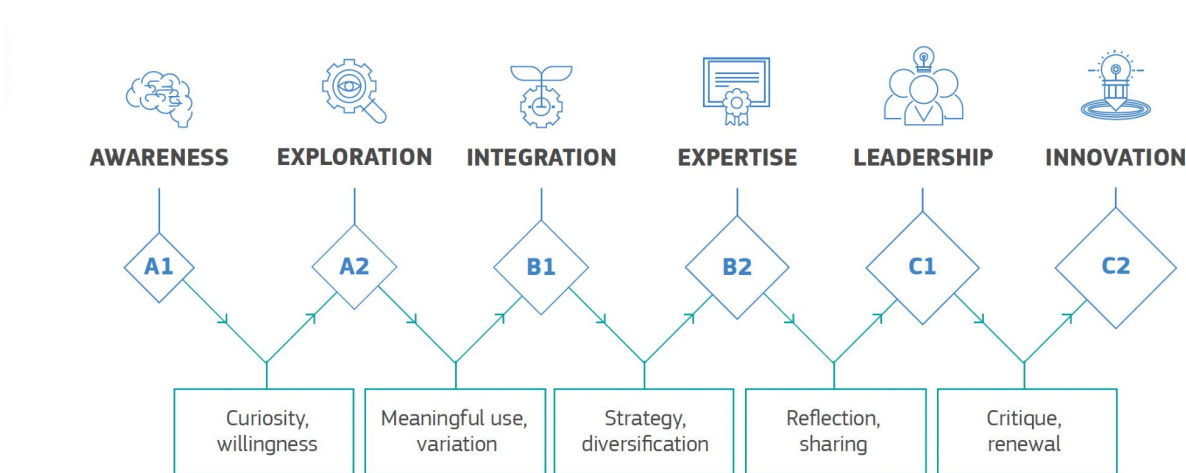


FIGURE 5: DIGCOMPEDU PROGRESSION MODEL

Note. *DigCompEdu* (p. 29).

Thus, in the same way as the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)** was attributed a nomenclature to define the different stages of acquiring language skills competency, DigCompEdu also uses that same nomenclature to refer to the different stages of acquiring digital skills competency. Consequently, according to this progression in digital competency from DigCompEdu (Redecker, 2017), this naming refers to different **proficiency levels** of digital competency related to the 6 aforementioned areas, and 22 subcompetences, which have been given the corresponding descriptors.

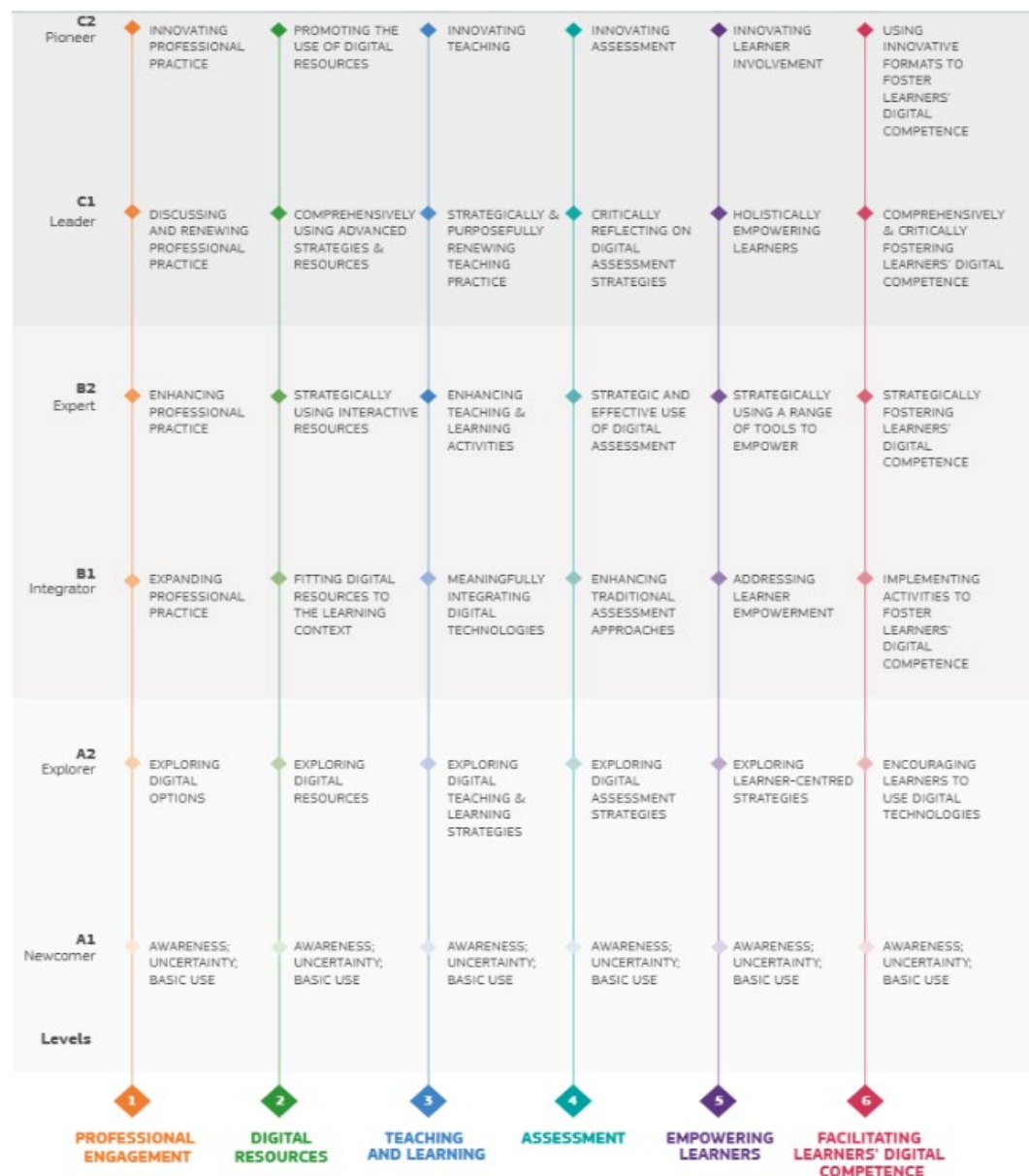
Figure 3. *DigCompEdu proficiency levels.*



Note. *Own elaboration from DigCompEdu.*

All these levels not only allow educators to find out their current proficiency level in digital competency, but also to establish a roadmap to progress to later stages, as well as to be aware of the activities that could be done in any of them.

Figure 4. Assessment of digital competence through Ideal review levels A1 to C2.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 31).

Recall so you won't forget: Take a moment to try to remember these terms and definitions.

1. What is the purpose of DigCompEdu?
2. What competences does DigCompEdu address, and in how many areas can educators work on them?
3. What does CEFRL stands for, and what does DigCompEdu have in common with CEFRL?
4. What are DigCompEdu proficiency levels?

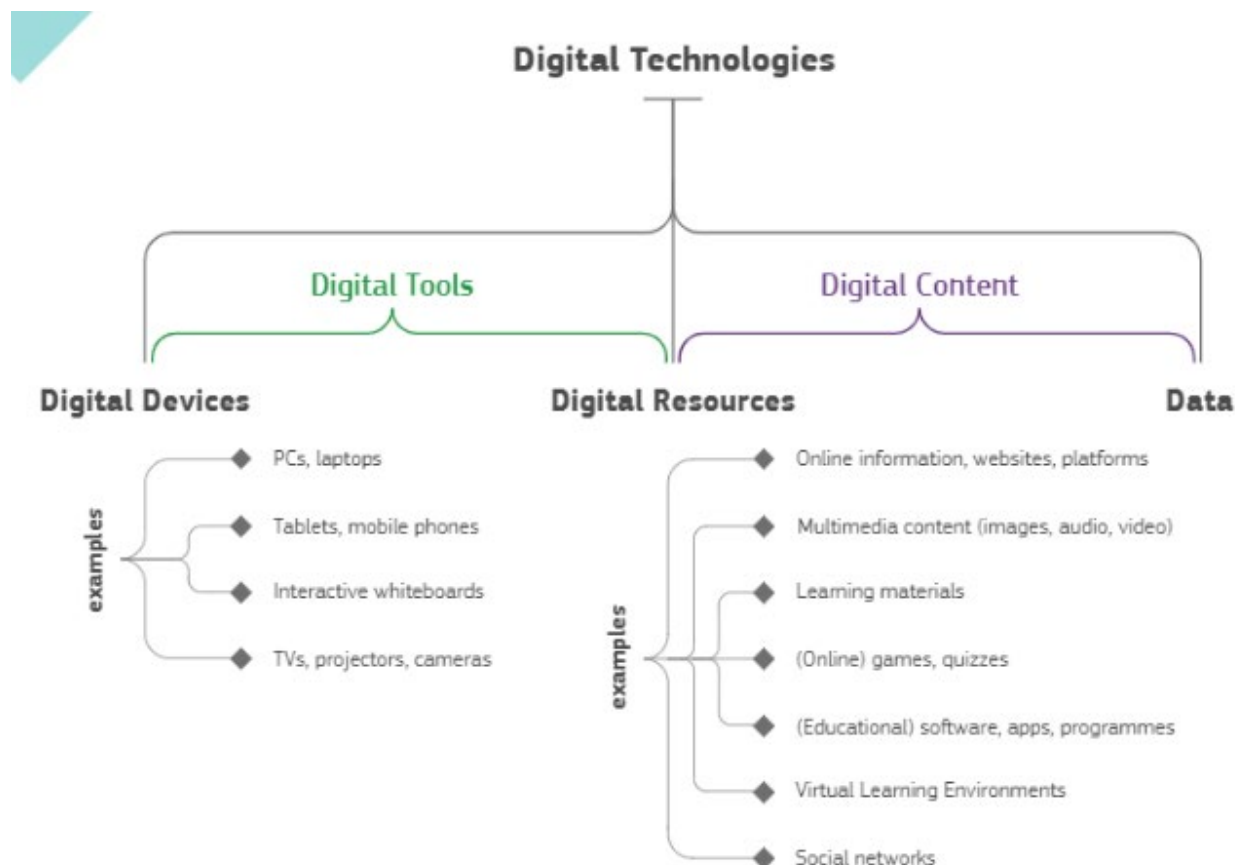
Apart from figuring out what sort of “digital educator” you are, you can also learn about ICT tools and apps based on the 6 DigCompEdu areas.

4. ICT tools & Apps

Developing skills to achieve DigCompEdu competences include the use of ICT tools and applications (apps). Their use in the classroom requires some specific requisites to use them as effectively as possible. To do so, the teacher should learn how to use those tools in advance (Palomares & Chisvert, 2016), and students should use them with a **community sense** (Tirado et al., 2009) to be able to choose, select, and use them with a critical and reflective attitude. Those digital tools are available in a lot of devices, specifically in **mobile devices** which includes phones and tablets, which younger children are experts on nowadays, because they have these in their day-to-day life (Bernacki, et al., 2020).

There is an area of interest in schools called mobile learning, and it is “learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions, using personal electronic devices” (Crompton, 2013, p. 4). Researchers have shown different ways in which mobile **technology devices** have been used to improve learning. Students use those devices to establish learning strategies (Jeng et al., 2010), request help (Reeves & Sperling, 2015), and participate in computer supported collaborative learning (Hsu & Ching, 2013). Mobile learning offers remarkable opportunities to students to explore and collaborate. DigCompEdu distributes digital technologies into the following scheme:

Figure 5. *Digital technologies.*



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 88).

Recently, the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) was adapted for language teachers of adults, which is also quite applicable to secondary education, in the EU project called **IDEAL**: Integrating Digital Education in Adult Language Teaching (Project number: 2019-1-DE02-KA204-006523). Since this more specific framework is based on the DigCompEdu, we will use it for working specifically with DigCompEdu from here on out.

There are a few reasons this framework is interesting for our training on ICTs. On the one hand, it offers a **self-assessment tool** to determine your level of digital competence, which is similar to the DigCompEdu assessment tool, but adapted for language learning contexts. On the other hand, it offers a **resource bank** of specific, free digital tools, with instructional videos and PDF guides on how to use them for language teaching and learning. You can see more about the IDEAL platform here: <http://ideal-project.eu/> or by scanning the QR code:

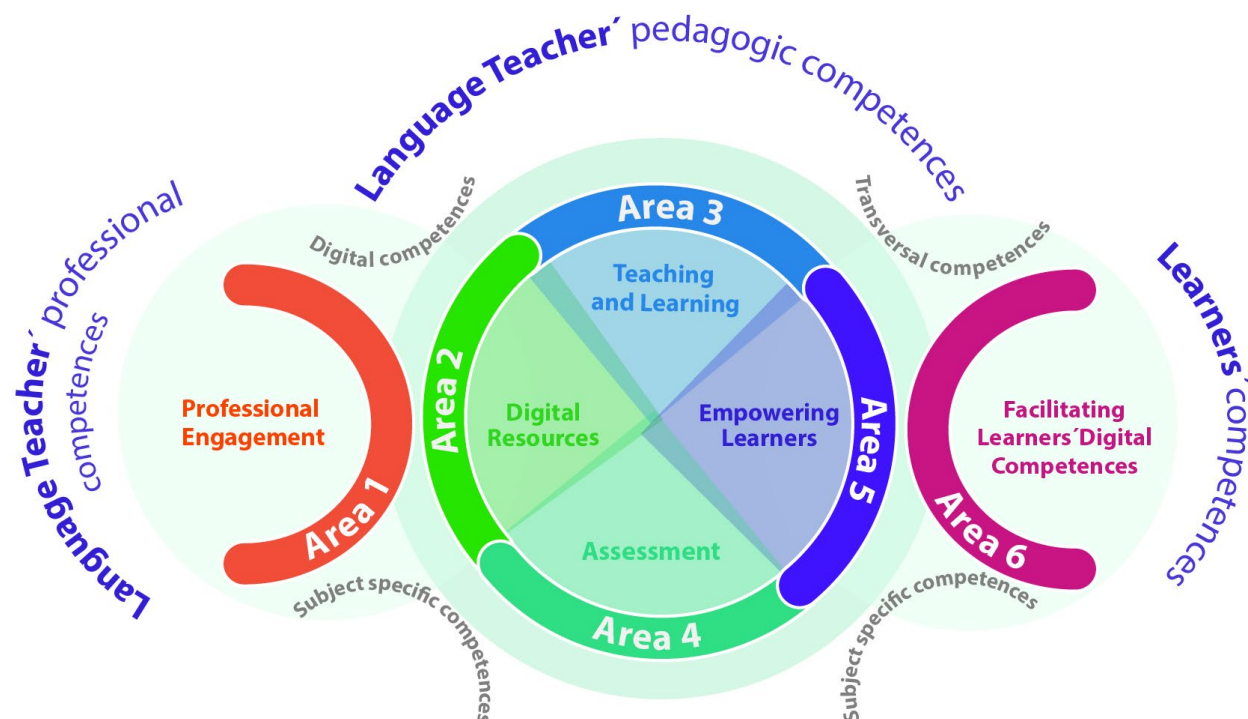


Reflect:

- Can you test your level per area by doing the IDEAL project test?
Use this link: <http://ideal-project.eu/self-assess-your-digital-competences>
 - Is your level what you expected? What is stronger and what would be interesting to work on in the future?

According to the previous information in our Basic Module, DigCompEdu includes 22 separate competences within the aforementioned **6 areas** that range from professional engagement to empowering learners. In Figure 5 we can distinguish those areas:

Figure 6. Areas and scope of DigCompEdu.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 15).

Now, let us study those 6 areas one by one and see what kind of resources can be used to make the most of those components of the digital competency in education.

Area 1. Professional engagement

Have you used Google Drive to work on a collaborative spreadsheet with fellow teachers for something related to your language classes? If so, then you are practicing **professional engagement**, which means using digital technologies for your professional interactions with colleagues, learners, parents and other interested parties, for your individual professional development and for the collective good and continuous innovation in the organisation and the teaching profession. This is the focus of Area 1. It includes the following competences:

Figure 7. Area 1 of DigCompEdu: Professional engagement.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 19).

You can find many examples of applications that serve to develop this competence. One of these examples is **Slack**, a communication platform where you can chat with your colleagues in order to exchange information, and for team organisation and collaboration. In this online application it is possible to compile pedagogical material, schedule assignments, or promote professional interaction. This inclusive and flexible way of working allows educators to create work teams in their own space, giving it a name, and start sharing and connecting through its communication channels (chat lines, tasks, plans...). Plus, Slack enables you to link to other apps from its platforms that you may use, like Google Drive, Dropbox or Trello.

For example, if you want to organise the school day with Slack, you must open a personal profile, create a work team, create folders (e.g. one for the administrative documents, and another for pedagogical material), and also connect it to the meetings that you have in Google Calendar, and to the social networks of your high school: Instagram and X).

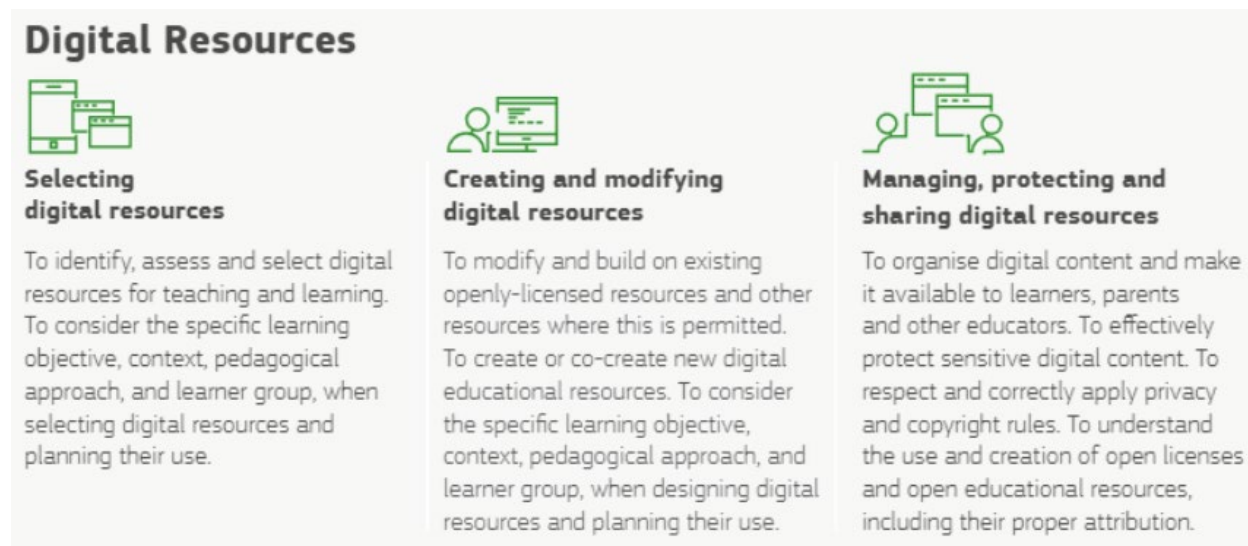
Reflect:

- Watch the video tutorial about Slack: <http://ideal-project.eu/slack-video-tutorial>
- How does the highlighted tool reflect the area?

Area 2. Digital resources

Maybe using Kahoot or Quizlet in your lessons sounds familiar to you. In that case, you have been working on **digital resources**, which belongs to Area 2 of DigCompEdu. This area not only refers to the use of these resources, but also to the capability of educators to forecast, select, create, modify, manage, and share digital content created with those resources, without forgetting an appropriate usage of private image and data of students. Hence, this area includes the following competences:

Figure 8. Area 2 of DigCompEdu: Digital resources.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 20).

In this area, there are plenty of resources whose aim is to work on language skills in different formats and ways. Among them, Powtoon could be used to work on listening comprehension, Madmagz for written production, or Wakelet for reading comprehension.

We will showcase **Boords**, which is an app specifically aimed to work on spoken interaction. Boords is a storyboard creator platform where you can create videos guided by the toolkit available, and with the option of enhancing the creation process by using the AI tools available in the same platform. Using it is very easy, you only need to sign in to create a personal account, then create a project, and give the storyboard a name. Then, you can start from zero, to add your own material, or to look for material provided in the platform.

It is useful when you want all your students to express themselves orally about a certain topic, for example, to talk about their future plans in English. Boords allows them to create their own story about their future plans, inserting their own voice, and arranging a graphic story with a narrative using suitable future verb tenses.

Reflect:

- Watch the video tutorial about Slack: <http://ideal-project.eu/boords-video-tutorial>
- How does the highlighted tool reflect the area?

Area 3. Teaching and learning

The core of the pedagogical activity is the **teaching and learning** process, since it covers from the educator's academic preparedness (which refers to the ability to design, plan and implement the use of digital technologies) to monitoring the activities and making sure that the tool fosters students' working collaboratively and individually while they learn to self-regulate their learning pace. It is represented in Area 3 of DigCompEdu and includes the following competences:

Figure 9. Area 3 of DigCompEdu: Teaching and learning.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 21).

With regard to the teaching and learning digital competence, there are many interesting options that you can use in the classroom, some addressed mainly to remote working and flipped methodologies, like PlayPosit, while others are focused on learning while having fun, like EducaPlay, and others aim to work on collaborative tasks and remote working, with the option of integrating these into a learning management system (LMS), like **Acadly**. Acadly is an online platform that allows you to insert dynamic activities (polls, quizzes, word clouds...) for them to be done in-person, online or in a hybrid environment, with the option of integrating interactive recordings, Zoom meetings, discussion, and collaborative tasks. For a quick start, you need to sign in and register as a teacher, and then start adding new assignments or tasks to getting started with this tool, which has three steps: adding a timeline, including task information, and connecting to a syllabus. Then, you can create a specific place for your class.

You can use this tool, for example, by asking your students to read a text, then answer questions about that text in an Acadly quiz, and finally they can work on sharing ideas and promoting critical thinking when they are physically in the classroom.

Reflect:

- Watch the video tutorial about Slack: <http://ideal-project.eu/acadly-video-tutorial>
- How does the highlighted tool reflect the area?

Area 4. Assessment

Developing any given activity must include a way of assessing it in order to conclude the whole teaching process. That is why there exist countless ways of assessing a specific content integrating digital technologies; that is why we can say that technologies can enhance existing assessment strategies, which you will see an example of in the Assessment module with digitalized rubrics. However, apart from assessing some particular content, digital assessment resources can also be used to gather individual records about students' learning behaviour, and to give feedback to that way of learning. The **assessment** stage is considered in Area 4 of DigCompEdu and it includes the competences represented in Figure 8.

As respects digital resources to assess, it is possible to find a good deal of diversity in tools, like Google Forms if you want to compile information about some topic in a questionnaire format, ClassMarker to create exam sheets, or Wizer to explore and create worksheets for practical exercises. We will put **Socrative** as an example because it is a digital formative assessment online and intuitive platform that allows educators to create online quizzes.

Thanks to this tool, content comprehension could be evaluated. At the same time, you could make your students reflect on these contents to enhance their learning awareness, or set the scenario for starting a debate. The way of getting started with this tool is to create a profile as a teacher, and start writing the question prompts, to which you can add media resources, like images, etc. In addition, you can mix question typology, including: true-false, multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions. To make it available to users, students' will need to access it through a student log in, and you will share a numerical or a QR code with them. Once everybody is connected, you can launch quizzes using different options, competitively or at teacher's pace or students' individual pace, in pairs, etc. Socrative also allows you to have all answers visible is desired, and to share quizzes with other teachers.

A practical example using Socrative can be generating a quiz about English language usage in formal and informal registers, so that students have to choose the correct option, alternating true/false, and multiple choice questions. If you use a teacher's pace modality, you can review answers out loud at the end of the activity in class, using the projector, and hiding student's names, so everyone can see and reflect about the language correctness.

Figure 10. Area 4 of *DigCompEdu*: Assessment.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 21)

Reflect:

- Watch the video tutorial about Socrative: <http://ideal-project.eu/socrative-video-tutorial>
- How does the highlighted tool reflect the area?

Area 5. Empowering learners

In terms of supporting learner-centred pedagogic strategies and boosting their active involvement in the learning process, digital technologies can facilitate students' active engagement. Meanwhile, technologies contribute to adapt to learners' levels of competence, interests, and learning needs. Thus, digital technologies help educators to get their learners empowered by exploring a topic, experimenting with different options, giving different solutions to a problem or project, connecting ideas, or being in touch with real situations. Area 5 of DigCompEdu is about **empowering learners**, and it includes these competences:

Figure 11. Area 5 of DigCompEdu: Empowering learners.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 22).

Again, you have multiple tools at your disposal to focus on diverse aspects aimed to empower your students, for example, Wordwall to create and edit personalized tasks, Flax to select vocabulary and compare its usage in different contexts and according to their function in the speech, etc. You also can use an interesting tool called **Mentimeter**, which is an online platform that allows you to create presentations that include questions to be posed in real time to your audience. With this tool, you can have instant answers in your slides for you to comment on them, you can also create funny competitions based on a gamified task, or you can use the answers to follow-up your students progress. In order to do so, you need to register and create your own account before starting to generate presentations. Students can access your presentation using a numerical or a QR code.

One way of using Mentimeter is generating a debate where they should, in the first place, write words to make a word cloud out of a brainstorming, then watch a video and answer a few open-ended questions about its content. They can have an oral debate afterwards, and they can finally type long answers as a conclusion of what they talked about.

Reflect:

- Watch the video tutorial about Mentimeter: <http://ideal-project.eu/mentimeter-video-tutorial>
- How does the highlighted tool reflect the area?

Area 6. Facilitating learners' digital competence

Once you have all previous five areas under control, **facilitating learners' digital competence** would be the last step to be a digitally competent educator. Taking into account that being competent in digital terms is one of the transversal competences educators need to instil in learners, it is important to incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments through technological media, that require students to have a collaborative and participatory role, and where they themselves manipulate a diversity of tools while they learn to solve problems and to use those tools responsibly. It is all represented in Area 6 of DigCompEdu, and it includes the competences of Figure 10.

Regarding this area, you can find tools based on audio tracks, such as Audacity or Vocaroo, on interactive presentations, such as Emaze, Canva or Genially, on virtual worlds, such as

Second Life, or on learning English naturally through pieces of news and articles, such as News in levels, and many others. One example to work this area's competences is **Coogole**, which is a freeware to create mind maps. With this tool students can produce hierarchically structured documents, like branching trees, in order to visually organise information, which is useful in class to work individually and in groups, to share information, to generate debate, to plan, take notes or solve problems.

Figure 12. Area 6 of DigCompEdu: Facilitating learners' digital competence.



Note. DigCompEdu (p. 23).

Regarding this area, you can find tools based on audio tracks, such as Audacity or Vocaroo, on interactive presentations, such as Emaze, Canva or Genially, on virtual worlds, such as Second Life, or on learning English naturally through pieces of news and articles, such as News in levels, and many others. One example to work this area's competences is **Coogle**, which is a freeware to create mind maps. With this tool students can produce hierarchically structured documents, like branching trees, in order to visually organise information, which is useful in class to work individually and in groups, to share information, to generate debate, to plan, take notes or solve problems.

You can use Coogle by creating your own profile, choosing among the six education options and the kind of maps you want to use, whether a concept map or a mind map. Then, you can write the information and select the best visual and editing options. A good example of usage of this tool in class for this competence will be asking students to create their own mind map after explaining content, to review for an exam or to teach their colleagues something.

Reflect:

- Watch the video tutorial about Coogle: <http://ideal-project.eu/coggle-video-tutorial>
- How does the highlighted tool reflect the area?

5. More ICTs & Artificial Intelligences (AIs)

Even though there is excessive information about ICTs and you as an educator need time to be up to date and to get adapted to new tools, it is essential that you connect to some of those tools so they can be useful to develop the teaching and learning process at present. Moreover, the scenario is becoming increasingly more challenging for educators to manage ICTs due to the arrival of **artificial intelligence (AI)**, which, as we said previously, can threaten basic skill use (writing) or make some classroom tasks obsolete. In Table 3 you will find a few interesting AI resources that you can use for different purposes in your foreign language classroom.

Table 3. *AI tools for foreign language learning.*

Aim	AI tool(s)	Aim	AI tool(s)
Abstract	Wordtune	Generate activities from content	Brisk (extension to add to Chrome)
Conclusions	EditPad, Smodia	Debate	Twee, DebateAI.org
Re-writing	Parafasist, Conch	Words & expressions contextualised	Yarin
Revision & formatting	LorcaEditor	Text generators	ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, Copilot
Plagiarism	Undetectable	Generate prompts to use in ChatGPT	AIPrim, Sounds Right
Completion	Udocz	Speaking assistant	Conversation AI
Full text	Essai	Avatars	Synthesia, Tokkingheads
Register	Writetone	Presentations	Simplified

Reflect:

- Can you reflect upon the idea of how AIs can interfere in the educational sphere?
What are its advantages and disadvantages?
- How do you see them used in your class?

6. Conclusion & Final task

Following the practical case where Ms. López was aiming to include ICT tools in her classroom for her students to develop their digital competence through ICTs while practicing their language skills, we reviewed the digital competence and suggested some ICT tools to work on every area of DigCompEdu.

Now, take your time to do the following task. You can use the chart below to complete the task, and there you will find an example, too.

1. Select one case or problem that you detected in your classroom.
2. Pick one digital resource from the IDEAL website or from the AI resource table and focus on one language skill.
3. Describe how you would develop an activity with that tool to address that case/problem.
4. Discuss which DigCompEdu area is most in focus with the tool and why.
5. If applicable, make some comments about the tool.

Table 4. *Draft table for final task.*

Case / Problem	Tool(s)	Skill	Methodology(ies)	Comments
e.g. Public speaking anxiety	FlipGrid	e.g. Oral production	Flipped classroom	Need to teach the tool before using it
Activity description:				

Note. Own elaboration.

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