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| **Project ID: 2021-1-CZ01-KA220-SCH-000034484**  Ein Bild, das Grafiken, Grafikdesign, Cartoon, Text enthält.  Automatisch generierte Beschreibung  **COURSE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**  *e-Modules: Teaching Learning activities and their technology*  *enhanced material set to develop*  Ein Bild, das Text, Schrift, Logo, Grafiken enthält.  Automatisch generierte Beschreibung  **Thematic Units for Week-Long Workshop Sessions:**  **Inquiry-Based Integrated Learning Workshop Series**  **on the Intersection of Arts, Science, and Policy"**  ***M 1-6: Environmental Education dictionary***  ***Created by students***  **COURSE AUTHOR:**  ***©Tatjana Christelbauer MA (TC)***  ACD Team, Austria   |  | | --- | |  |   ***DISCLAIMER***  *Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.*  **COURSE SHARING LICENSE CC BY-NC-SA**=   **Canonical URL:** <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>  **MODULE 1-6:**  **Creative Tool: Environmental Education Dictionary created by students**  **SUBJECTS:** transdisciplinary, descriptive approach  Related Lessons/Workshops by ACD Team: M1 LOVE Earth to the Moon and Back …; M6 Language Diplomacy |

1. **Student-Created Environmental Dictionary as a Learning Tool**

The student-created Environmental Education Dictionary with an descriptive approach and open-method for creation may open more opportunities for understanding of terminology used,

than a standard curriculum-provided dictionary.

A "descriptive approach" in a dictionary refers to documenting and explaining how words are actually used by speakers in everyday language, rather than prescribing how they *should* be used. This approach embraces linguistic diversity and evolving language, capturing real-life usage, slang, and regional variations. Descriptive dictionaries reflect language as it is naturally spoken and written, offering a more accurate snapshot of current vocabulary and expressions.

This activity is aimed in empowering students to take an active role in learning by exploring environmental concepts through creation, collaboration, and personalization. Such approach may be uniquely beneficial, while by creating their own dictionary, students move from passive recipients of information to active participants in their learning journey. They’re not just memorizing terms—they’re analyzing, defining, and contextualizing them. This process reinforces retention and builds a deeper understanding of environmental topics, fostering long-term learning.

* 1. **Brief Introduction: Dictionary**

A dictionary[[1]](#footnote-1) is a reference tool that provides definitions, pronunciations, and sometimes examples for words, helping users understand their meanings and usage. It is useful for expanding vocabulary, clarifying language, and offering insight into the correct context for terms.

For students, a dictionary serves as a valuable resource for learning new concepts in any subject, making it an essential aid in education.

Today, online translation tools like Google Translate, DeepL, and Microsoft Translator make it easy to access multiple languages instantly, helping users understand terms in different languages and cultural contexts. These tools allow users to translate words and phrases accurately, providing definitions, synonyms, and contextual uses that enrich learning.

From a psychological perspective, understanding and defining terms promotes active learning, which improves memory retention and comprehension. When students grasp the meaning of terminology and put it into their own words, they create mental associations that make the terms easier to remember. This process strengthens connections in the brain, making terminology more accessible and applicable to real-world scenarios.

1. **Task Brief:**

**Creating an Inclusive Environmental Education Dictionary with Real-World Connections**

*Objective:*  
Build a collaborative "Environmental Education Dictionary" that defines and contextualizes key terms with real-world examples and actions. This project will deepen your understanding of environmental concepts while helping you connect these ideas to current issues and solutions. It’s also a fun way to create an assessment tool that’s accessible for everyone.

**Competencies & Skills promoted:**

***Encourages Critical Thinking and Relevance:***  
Students are encouraged to decide which terms are most meaningful and relevant to their own lives and communities. This creative agency promotes critical thinking, as students assess and prioritize environmental issues that matter to them, like local conservation efforts, pollution challenges, or renewable energy initiatives. This relevance makes the dictionary personally meaningful and memorable.

***Empowers Creative Expression and Diverse Perspectives:***  
Allowing students to express themselves creatively—through writing, AI-generated art, and translations—makes learning more engaging and inclusive. Every student brings a unique perspective, enhancing the dictionary with a diverse set of ideas and visuals. This variety helps students see environmental issues from multiple perspectives, making the dictionary a truly collaborative and inclusive tool.

***Encourages Cultural and Linguistic Exploration:***  
Translating terms into multiple languages invites students to explore how different cultures approach environmental education. Students learn that some languages have rich terminology for ecological concepts, while others may struggle to capture certain ideas. This cultural and linguistic comparison provides insights into global environmental awareness and fosters respect for diversity.

***Hands-On Practice with Real-World Skills:***  
Creating a dictionary teaches valuable skills that go beyond the environmental content itself. Students learn about translation, the nuances of language, and the use of AI tools—all real-world skills that can benefit them in various fields. Crafting a resource that’s accessible for everyone (including blind students through audio and tactile features) also builds empathy and an understanding of inclusive design.

***Supports Formative Assessment and Continuous Learning:***  
The dictionary creation process acts as a formative assessment tool, allowing teachers to gauge student understanding at each stage. Unlike a traditional assessment, this approach is fun, interactive, and stress-free. Students can see their growth in understanding from one lesson to the next as the dictionary expands, and they feel proud of their cumulative work.

***Builds Community and Collaboration:***  
This dictionary is a collaborative effort, enabling students to work together, share ideas, and provide feedback on each other’s work. By building it as a group, students can explore environmental issues as a shared concern, encouraging teamwork and discussion. This is a vital step in fostering a sense of environmental responsibility and solidarity in young people.

In summary, a student-created dictionary empowers learners to take ownership of their education, foster creativity, and explore global perspectives. They gain a personalized, comprehensive understanding of environmental education—one that will stay with them far longer than memorizing definitions from a pre-made list. This hands-on, inclusive, and collaborative approach helps students feel more connected to both their learning and the world around them.

* 1. **Step-by-step-Guidance:**

**Identify Key Terms and Relate Them to Current Issues:**  
After each lesson, choose key terms and link each to a pressing environmental issue or a positive action happening today. For example:

* + **"Sustainability"** can relate to global efforts like reducing plastic use.
  + **"Biodiversity"** could link to the importance of protecting endangered species in the Amazon rainforest.

**Describe Terms with Action-Oriented Examples:**  
Write definitions that not only explain each term but also suggest a positive action or solution. Use relatable examples to show how people are addressing these issues:

* + For **“Renewable Energy”**, describe solar and wind power as eco-friendly energy sources and connect it to a student action, like reducing electricity waste at home or school.
  + **"Carbon Footprint"** could be explained through examples of everyday actions (like using public transportation or biking) that help reduce emissions.

**Contextualize Terms with a Narrative:**  
Add a sentence about why the term is important now, addressing a real-world concern. This will ground the terms in urgent environmental discussions:

* + **"Ecosystem"** – Define it as a community of living organisms and describe a threatened ecosystem, like coral reefs, emphasizing the importance of their preservation.

**Translate for Accessibility:**  
After defining and contextualizing, translate each definition into a different language with AI translation tools. This introduces a global viewpoint on environmental issues and can be fun for students who speak or are learning other languages.

**Use AI Art to Illustrate Actions or Concerns Visually:**  
With AI art tools, create images that visually represent each term in action, like a beautiful rendering of “recycling” showing various recyclable items or “afforestation” with trees being planted. Include visually descriptive elements so that they can later be adapted for tactile or audio descriptions to enhance accessibility.

**Add Audio Descriptions and Stories:**  
Record an audio description for each term. Go beyond the definition—tell a short story about the issue, action, or example related to the term. These recordings can support blind students and add storytelling to your dictionary:

* + For **“Water Conservation”**, include an audio story about reducing water use at home or a city initiative for water recycling.

**Build Your Dictionary Together:**  
Assemble the dictionary as a group, including text, translations, images, and audio. Each lesson’s dictionary entry will reinforce your knowledge while creating a resource accessible to all.

* 1. **Creative extension:**

Create a "Descriptive Dictionary of Proverbs" that explores the wisdom of diverse cultures through their proverbs, translating and relating each one to current environmental or social issues and good practices. This dictionary will help students understand cultural perspectives on sustainability, community, and care for the environment.

**Guidance:**

**Select Proverbs from Various Cultures**   
Find proverbs from different cultures that reflect themes of nature, environment ecology community, responsibility, resilience, or choose one theme which you find most relevant. Examples include sayings about water conservation, the importance of trees, or the value of unity.

**Translate and Describe the Meaning:**  
Translate each proverb and explain its literal meaning. Then, write a short description of its cultural significance, focusing on how it conveys values or lessons relevant to today’s issues, such as climate change, conservation, or community action.

**Relate Each Proverb to a Real-World Issue or Good Practice:**  
After describing the meaning, connect each proverb to a current environmental or social issue. For example:

* + A proverb about "protecting one’s roots" could relate to preserving forests or indigenous land rights.
  + A saying about "the power of drops in making an ocean" could inspire water conservation efforts or community actions that lead to significant impact over time.

**Use Online Translation Tools to Capture Nuance:**  
Use online translation tools to explore proverbs in their native languages, discussing any differences or nuances that arise. Reflect on how cultural context influences language, and include insights on why some meanings may shift in translation.

**Create an Engaging Presentation of Your Dictionary:**  
Compile the proverbs, translations, descriptions, and issue connections into an illustrated, multimedia dictionary. Include visuals or AI-generated art to represent each proverb’s theme and meaning, making the dictionary visually engaging and inclusive.

* 1. **Outcome:**  
     Your *Environmental Education Dictionary* will become a powerful tool for understanding both environmental terminology and the actions we can take to make a difference.

It’s a project that connects students to global issues in a fun and accessible way, while serving as an ongoing, dynamic assessment of your learning.

Including the creative extension with proverbs, the completed dictionary will offer a rich, culturally diverse view of proverbs, providing meaningful lessons tied to today’s environmental and social challenges. This activity will deepen students’ cultural awareness and critical thinking, while they also practice linguistic skills and connect timeless wisdom with modern-day solutions.

1. **Useful weblinks with tools and insights for creating dictionary:**

Edutopia: using AI-generated images for vocabulary: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/using-ai-generated-images-teach-vocabulary/>

Twinkl: useful tools and ideas for creating dictionary<https://www.twinkl.ch/search?q=dictionary+activities>

Open AI Chat GPT, DeepL translator: <https://hnd.www.deepl.com/en/translator/l/cs/id?utm_term=&utm_campaign=CH%7CPMAX%7CC%7CEnglish&utm_source=google&utm_medium=paid&hsa_acc=1083354268&hsa_cam=21569272977&hsa_grp=&hsa_ad=&hsa_src=x&hsa_tgt=&hsa_kw=&hsa_mt=&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw7Py4BhCbARIsAMMx-_JgP17cLkdXo_hPG6qlyb9sKHx_j_r8w1AIsMr_ZSH_z3ArZyeuuXIaAsGQEALw_wcB>

Braille-translator: <https://www.brailletranslator.org/>

Creative example by LEGO Education: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/lego-dictionary>

YouTube Video by EuropeanSchoolEducationPlatform: Building a multilingual dictionary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rys1jjzP3X4>

1. Sources: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dictionary> , <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dictionary> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)