How to Guide

HOW TO USE IOW DICTIONARY IN A CLASS:

DISCUSSING ABOUT EXISTING ENTRIES AND/OR WRITING A NEW ONE

Participants

- students from high school to university; group within a community
- teacher/s, professor/s, educator/s, volunteer/s; where possible, favour interdisciplinarity and the combination of different skills, knowledges, and perspectives
- one facilitator from IOW (better in person, otherwise online)

Contexts

- multicultural classes, FL/L2 classes, groups

Hours

- flexible and adjustable

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



A. *Discussing existing entries*

1. present the **ethos** and the **purposes** of IOW dictionary
2. invite the students to **navigate**/navigate **IOW website** with them; ask them their first impression, their feedback about readability, design, simplicity of access, etc.
3. you can ask students to **pick up one** or **more entry** and invite them to discuss it/them together in small groups, and then report their ideas to the whole class

4. familiarize the students with the **structure** of IOW dictionary (the different steps, from Abstract/s to Discussion)
5. invite the students to reflect about the **purpose** of the different steps analysed.

B. Writing a new entry

1. follow the instruction as in **part A) above**
2. invite the students to **think about a keyword** that they would like to analyse
3. **brainstorming**: this is a very important moment for the development of the students' awareness of how language (re)produces Otherness. Keywords can come global social phenomena, from specific national or local contexts, or from peer in-group situations. You can invite students to think who is Otherized in public or political discourse, who is the Other for them, why, under which circumstances those individuals or groups are Otherized, and, if they want, whether they themselves have ever felt Othered and in which situation, etc. Different words will come out. You can write them on the classroom's board and then ask the students to choose/vote for the one they think it is more relevant for them. If unanimity is not reached, you can split the class in two – but not in more than two groups, as every group will be then divided in sub-groups.
4. divide the class into **small groups**, asking the students which step they would prefer to work on according to their interests, skills, or curiosity – the abstract/s, etymology, on/offline research for communication strategies, research for creative materials for the subversion, etc.
5. **research and writing** are done both in class and at home. You can help and guide your students with the research of materials, the actual analysis of the word, and with language issues that may arise during the process of writing – e.g., translation
6. if the writing of the entry is an **interdisciplinary project** involving, e.g., the Arts teacher, the teacher can guide students in the production of individual and/or collective artworks
7. **final discussion/restitution**: invite students to reflect whether and how their perception of the word has changed throughout the process of research, analysis, and subversion.

If you notice that the **students have heavily relied** on **AI,** use the texts produced by AI to **help them reflect** on the **quality** and the **information** provided by AI to **develop critical digital literacy.** You can refer to:

- Giorgis, P., Valente, A. (2026). Rebutting GenAI: Engaging with IOW Dictionary and Podcast in Classroom Practices to develop Critical Language Awareness and Critical Digital Literacy. In Luporini, A., Giacosa, A. (eds.). *Rethinking English Language Teaching in an Algorithmic World. Critical Approaches to Human-Centered and Digitally-Enhanced Education.* Bologna University Press (BUP).