

Our Environmental Choices and Their Global Effects

Spanish III Environmental Unit Submitted by: Kimberly Baxter

Overview of the Unit

This unit has been designed to practice the use of the Spanish language to give opinions about the environmental problems we face today. Over the course of two weeks, we look at what the environmental issues are, how we talk about those problems using the Spanish language, what Spanish-speaking countries have to say about our current environmental situation, and in what ways we can help save our planet.



The primary language content of this unit is environmental vocabulary and the indicative vs. subjunctive moods. These two elements of language are brought together to discuss real-world issues and how we, as young adults, can work together to help a global problem.

Unit Goals

By the end of this unit, students are able to (in Spanish):

- ✓ Give an opinion using the subjunctive mood
- ✓ Discuss current environmental problems
- ✓ Provide solutions to environmental problems
- ✓ Recognize the environmental views of Spanish-speaking countries, specifically global warming

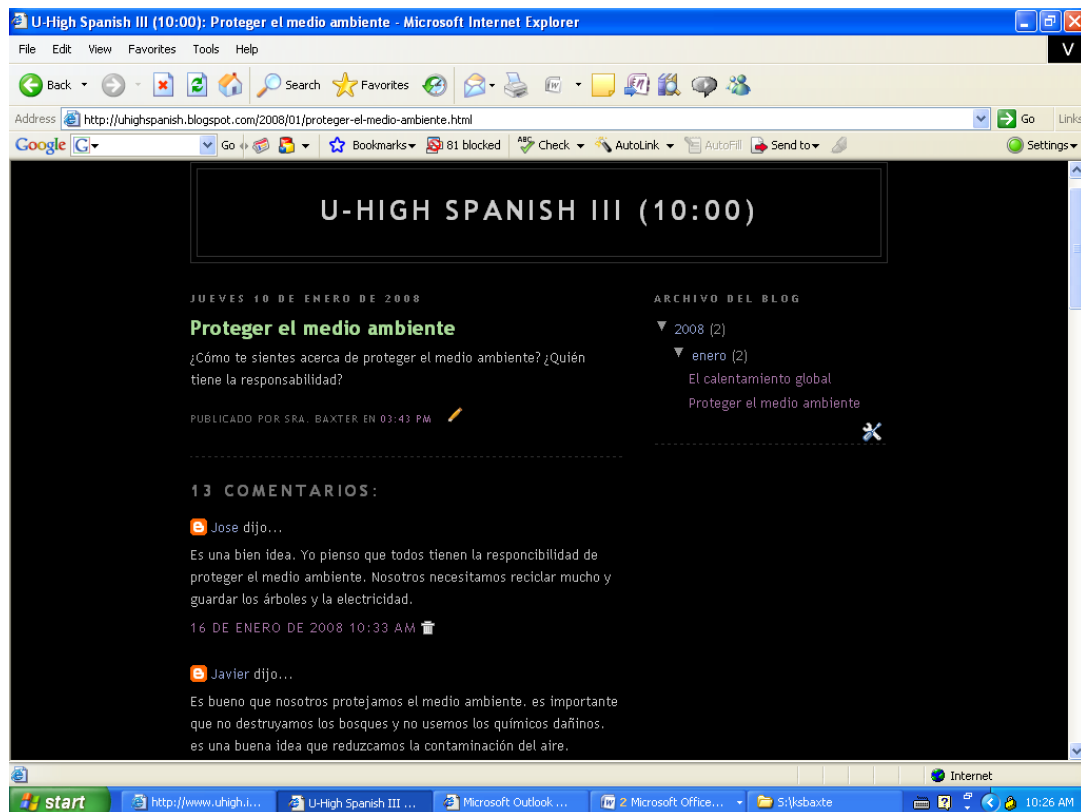
Illinois Foreign Language Learning Standards

- ✓ 28.A.5: Comprehend a variety of oral and audio presentations in academic, technical, social or work environments.
- ✓ 28.A.3b: Follow instructions in the target language as given in multistep segments for assignments and activities in and out of the classroom.
- ✓ 28.B.5a: Discuss and defend a position on an issue in a discussion.
- ✓ 28.C.4c: Compare the target language with one or more languages in terms of vocabulary, word use, phrase and sentence structure and complete text structures.
- ✓ 28.D.4c: Present a short original piece on a given theme with some guidelines.
- ✓ 30.A.5c: Use the target language to analyze current science issues from the perspective of speakers of the language.

Learning Activities (all activities are performed in Spanish)

1. Teacher introduces Environmental Unit with vocabulary words necessary for sufficient discussion of the environmental topics.
2. Students collaborate to identify environmental problems and give descriptions using the new vocabulary words. Students then work with the other students at their table to create a list of possible ways to reduce or eliminate the problems they identified. This list of solutions is shared with the other groups through the class Discussion Board in Blackboard.

3. Students take a survey through a link in Blackboard about their current recycling habits. The survey results are projected in graph form and reviewed in class via the main screen. Students discuss the trends in the class's recycling habits and give possible reasons why the data results are the way they are (access to recycling bins, laziness, etc.) We then discuss how recycling or not recycling is related to our environmental issues.
4. Teacher gives introduction to global warming and leads class discussion on their background knowledge of the issue. Students offer responses to questions such as:
 - a. Does global warming exist?
 - b. What vocabulary words have we learned that are directly related to global warming?
 - c. Have you seen the movie by Al Gore? What is your opinion about the data in that movie?
5. Students access two YouTube videos about global warming (in Spanish) through a link in Blackboard. As they watch and listen, students complete general comprehension questions to guide them through the most important points of the videos. We then discuss the videos as a class and students share oral responses to the videos.
6. Subjunctive mood lesson: Teacher introduces the subjunctive mood formation and how to use this mood to give an opinion (it's sad that..., it's best that..., etc.). Students practice in class to use these opinions to talk about various environmental problems.
7. Blogger.com: Teacher introduces the class's blog and invites all students using their email addresses. Students are given two questions about the environment and choose one to which they respond. The use of the subjunctive mood is strongly encouraged in their responses, but not required, in order to allow for genuine reactions.



8. Students respond to other students' comments in the class blog, stating whether there is agreement or disagreement and why the student feels that way.

9. Powerful Pictures: Using the main screen, teacher projects several “powerful pictures” of environmental issues (deforestation, air pollution, etc.) and students offer oral responses to the pictures using the subjunctive mood. Students then search the Internet to find their own powerful picture. Using the Classroom Spy program, the teacher displays the students’ screens with the pictures on the main screen for the class to see. The students again use the subjunctive mood to respond to the images.
10. Comic Strip: Students use Comic Life or Microsoft Word to create a comic strip that deals with an environmental issue from our unit. The focus of this assignment is to use our vocabulary and the subjunctive mood in a creative way to express our reactions about one of our environmental themes.
11. Comic strips are shared with the class using the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Aaron Barton
Español III - 1/21/08

El Calentamiento Global



Laptop Implications

The online collaboration that is offered to us through the use of the laptops allows for much more in-depth discussion and sharing of ideas than in a traditional classroom setting. In this unit, we utilize Blackboard to reach outside links for YouTube videos, Blogger.com, and a recycling survey. We also use Blackboard’s Discussion Board feature to share our initial brainstorming on environmental problems and solutions, as well as the environmental comic strips at the end of the unit. The Internet is needed for students to search for environmental pictures to share with the other members of the class. Classroom Spy makes sharing those environmental pictures possible by displaying their screens on the classroom’s main screen. Also, Comic Life or Microsoft Word is used to create the environmental comic strips.

Role of the Teacher

The purpose of this lesson is to allow students the freedom to form their own opinions about our environmental problems and to provide possible solutions, all while using the Spanish language. The teacher promotes students’ creative responses through the use of several activities utilizing technology, and also encourages the collaboration among the students to create their own ideas. Direct instruction of the vocabulary and grammar is given, along with daily practice of those specific language components throughout the unit.

Student Response

Students responded very positively to studying the subjunctive mood “hidden” in the environmental theme. Students were able to take a difficult grammatical concept and use it to talk about world issues that they have heard about in other classes, at home, and on the news. The student responses in the class blog were detailed and well-expressed, and they had easily embedded the subjunctive mood into their opinions. The skills demonstrated in the comic strip assignment at the end of the unit were also a strong indication of the high level of learning that occurred throughout the unit.