
Sustainability Unit Example: Middle School Spanish

Designer(s): Scarsdale School District

How do curriculum and instruction change when sustainability becomes the guiding approach? How does the content become richer? How does the level of inquiry deepen? This document provides an example of a teacher-created unit that is grounded in the content and pedagogy of sustainability education.

Background

The unit described was an outcome of the 2007 Summer Sustainability Institute sponsored by the Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELf: <http://www.celfoundation.org>), with facilitation provided by Creative Change Educational Solutions(<http://www.creativechange.net>), and Scott Beall consulting. During the intensive week-long institute, teachers gained content knowledge, resources and strategies to redesign their approach to curriculum and instruction using the lens of sustainability. Guided planning time and one-on-one mentoring at the institute enabled teachers to walk away with a draft unit plan to implement during the school year.

After the week-long institute, the teachers were provided on-going support and communication. Teachers sent their in-progress lesson plans to Creative Change and CELF, and received feedback and mentoring via phone and e-mail. This document is an outcome of this process.

¡Mantenga la tierra! – Maintain the Earth Lesson and Independent Project

Goal: Each student will create a flyer that explains an environmental issue in simple terms and provide suggestions for ameliorating the problem. The flyer will be in Spanish and could be distributed in Spanish-speaking countries or in areas of the U.S. that are heavily populated with Spanish-speakers.

Objectives:

- learn vocabulary related to the environment
- use Spanish language skills to describe an environmental issue
- apply prior knowledge and continue research on issues pertaining to sustainability
- make use of affirmative and negative commands (an 8th grade grammar topic)

Materials:

- list of new vocabulary
- assignment and rubric
- sample flyer on overhead for students to view as a model of the final project

Timing: This project could be introduced in April, around the time of Earth Day. At this point in the year, 8th grade students have sufficient language skills to complete the task. Prior to introducing the project, students need to learn the grammatical rules for forming affirmative and negative commands.

Students will be assigned one of the following themes and will work independently:

1. Conserve energy
2. Reduce automobile pollution
3. Conserve water
4. Protect the ocean, beaches and sea life
5. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
6. Protect an endangered species (ie: blue butterfly, manatee, frogs, sea turtle)

Day 1:

- Introduce new vocabulary and conduct a Spanish-language brainstorm of activities we do (or should do) with the environment in mind
- Present the assignment

Day 2:

- Work in computer lab to research using suggested websites
- Start designing flyers – to be completed at home

Day 3: Rough draft to class for peer editing

Day 4: Turn in final draft

Vocabulario – El medio ambiente



el buzón de reciclaje - recycling bin
la botella - bottle
el plástico - plastic
la lata de aluminio – aluminum can
el vidrio - glass
la energía - energy
la luz / las luces – light /lights
la gasolina - gasoline
el petróleo - oil
la fábrica - factory
el transporte público – public transportation
el coche híbrido – hybrid car
la electricidad - electricity
los animals - animals
el sistema ecológico – ecological system
en peligro de extinción – in danger of extinction
la mariposa azul – blue butterfly
las ranas - frogs
la tortuga kemps riley – Kemps Riley turtle
especie - species
manatee
landfill

reducir – to reduce
reciclar – to recycle
reutilizar – to reuse
conservar – to conserve
apagar – to turn off
contaminar – to contaminate
montar en bicicleta – to ride a bike
proteger – to protect

¡Mantenga la tierra! - Maintain the earth! - Assignment

For this assignment, you will create a flyer that explains an environmental issue in simple terms and provides suggestions for ameliorating the problem. The flyer will be in Spanish and could be distributed in Spanish-speaking countries or in areas of the U.S. that are heavily populated with Spanish-speakers.

Your flyer should have:

- a title/headline in large font
- 3 to 5 sentence describing the issue (you can include statistics where applicable)
- 4 affirmative commands suggesting things people can do
- 4 negative commands suggesting things people should not do
- drawings, images and/or formatting that make the flyer appear interesting and professional
- information expressed using vocabulary and grammar that you have learned in class – *you can use a dictionary for a maximum of 10 new words (attach a list of these words to your final project)*

You will receive a grade for this assignment based on the following:

- Grammatical accuracy when describing the issue
- Quality of information about the issue
- Grammatical accuracy when forming affirmative and negative commands
- Relevance of suggestions/commands in relation to the problem
- Attractiveness and neatness (appearance)
- Complexity and creativity (content)

Rubric:

Spanish Language Component

Description of issue	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(x 2) = _____
Formation of commands	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(x 2) = _____
Complexity and creativity (of language used)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(x 1) = _____

Research and Information

Accuracy and depth	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(x 2) = _____
Pertinence of suggestions	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(x 2) = _____

Presentation

Attractiveness and neatness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(x 1) = _____
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TOTAL _____