

## Active Citizens

Fabiola Araiza teaches at the Ing. Leopoldo Naranjo Elementary School, one of 5332 schools in the state of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. It is one of the three schools in Nuevo Leon that have been part of the Promethean Ambassadors Project, in collaboration with MirandaNet.

The school philosophy is that the head teacher, teachers, secretary and janitor are all part of a team working with children and the wider community, using appropriate methods for developing students' knowledge, skills and attitudes that they use in their lives. The core values of the school are that:

Team work (students-teachers-community) is part of the daily routine.

The school practices and promotes international values of tolerance, perseverance, honesty, equity, respect, democracy, responsibility, solidarity and justice.

All the educational staff, the students and the community participate in a knowledge society.

The use of ICT is seen as part of teachers' developing practice, and involves all the participants in Global Citizenship.

## The Challenge

Basic education in Mexican schools is grounded in School Organization, Classroom Work, Teaching Methods, and Community Participation. School projects in teaching and learning are focused on these. Fabiola Araiza was keen to strengthen the teaching and learning process in relation to reading and learning. To achieve this goal she aimed to promote the construction of knowledge through collaborative classroom work, respect for diversity and the use of ICT. She hoped to develop a moral, intellectual and physical autonomy in the students to make them independent learners.

At the same time it was hoped to influence community transformation through Citizenship. This would build family and community participation in the school to strengthen school projects and outcomes. The home-school links were seen as critical in transforming the schools into a formative and participatory place for the community. They would provide crucial elements in answering and solving the challenges and social problems involved in the concept of citizenship.

### **“words in the wind ...”**

Fabiola was interested in measuring the impact of ACTIVboards on teaching and learning Citizenship with pupils who perceived themselves as having a low socio-economic status. She

was concerned because, as she said, “The subject was not of great interest to the students, even though it was about learning their rights and responsibilities as Mexican children. The aim was for them to acquire and practice each and every one of the universal values. The explanations that were given were like words that the wind took, useless.”

“Nonetheless, the situation made a 360-degree turn and the classes will never be the same. Since our classroom started using the ACTIVboard the students are showing more and more interest in Citizenship and other subjects.”

## **The Solution**

Three of the lessons that Fabiola devised illustrate the impact of the ACTIVboard on the children, and their perception of Citizenship.

### **Using the ACTIVboard as a Classroom Theatre.**

The local newspaper reported a court case that involved a woman setting fire to the son of her friend, as an act of revenge. Fortunately the child survived, and the defendant was sentenced to jail. “This news caused great shock among the students,” reported Fabiola, “and they could not stop talking about it. Thus, I decided to do some research using the local newspaper’s website. Once I found the information, I presented it to the students through ACTIVstudio on the ACTIVboard. The children became involved in role-play, and wanted to give the pyromaniac woman a jail sentence. That day many of the students did not take their recess time: they wanted to stay and continue investigating the news in more in depth, so that they could present it the next day.

The students showed so much enthusiasm (like they had never done before): they did everything that was needed for the completion of the work. The ACTIVboard was motivational and informative for the students. Through its use they were able to inform themselves about the events that occurred at a local level, and from it they were able to make conscious such values as respect and justice, something many people have come to forget.”

### **Promoting Citizenship: involving the whole school**

As part of the school's work on Citizenship, each grade had to create a comic character that represented a universal value, which was then to be posted it on the wall of the school patio. Fabiola’s students led this activity by preparing a simple PowerPoint presentation. They then took every class to Fabiola’s classroom and used the ACTIVboard to present suggestions and ideas to the rest of the school. Fabiola’s class then showed the other pupils a range of images that could

be said to represent universal values. This meant that each class could decide which images they would use in their work on the patio wall.

“This was a school activity organized by my class, in which the students were given complete access to the use of the ACTIVboard. I believe that each time they use it they learn more about how to manage the board for themselves. I think that it won't be long before they completely understand the functions that this technological tool have built in.”

### **Participating in regional events**

In Nuevo Leon there are a number of competitions for schools. Two of the most important are the interpretation of the Mexican National Anthem and the Youth Parliament. Naturally, every schools wants to win!.

#### **The National Anthem**

In the National Anthem contest, says Fabiola, “our school has always been placed last. We would practice in the school patio with a simple player and cassette. In order that the students were able to learn the lyrics, we would paste posters with the lyrics of the national anthem on the wall – and still the results were always embarrassing.”

Fabiola decided to use the ACTIVboard to teach the pupils. “The children could see the lyrics, hear the music, and sing the national anthem. It was fun for all of them, so much so that, from always being in 8th (and last) place we obtained 2nd place this time. The difference was considerably evident!”

#### **The Youth Parliament**

Every year 11- and 12-year-old students from schools across the region prepare a speech on a Citizenship value. Previously this was seen as a memorization activity, without real meaning for the student, who just repeated the script that had been taught. This year Fabiola decided to use the ACTIVboard as a way for the students to visualise the values and practise the presentation.

On the day of the Youth Parliament 36 students from across the region took part. “At the moment that my student presented her speech about the value of honesty, a judge yelled out that he could not believe that a child of that age could think such beautiful things regarding values. My student was placed second in the competition. At the end of all this she explained to all who were present that without the help of the new technology, she would not have been able to make such a good presentation.”

## **The Effects**

Instilling the values of Citizenship in young people and translating them into action is never the easiest of tasks. Fabiola Araiza has found that, by involving her students through using the ACTIVboard, she has been able to contribute to their growth and development so that they are aware of the world's existence in a wider sense. Developing respect for, and valuing, cultural, biological and social diversity is made easier by using technology within the classroom because, as she says, "it amplifies the horizons of the imagination and the understanding of the students."

## **E-citizens for the future**

In a relatively short time Fabiola Araiza has seen her children's lives and attitudes change.

"I now see a change in my students. I see in them individuals more responsible for their actions; individuals ready to act to make the world more equitable; individuals interested in working on a computer and acquiring a second language. They are interested in being able to communicate with you. They are no longer satisfied that I am the bridge between the groups. They are individuals want to know other ways of life, the customs of other groups, and who hold the name of their school and their country in high regard.

In the name of my students and myself, I would like to express our thanks to Promethean for their support in this project, and for their staff in developing our skills. "

Fabiola Araiza, Ing. Leopoldo Naranjo Elementary School, Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

## Images



**Bored pupils – before the ACTIVboard**



**InActive learning**



**Active Learners**



**The Trail**



**The Trial**



**Teaching other classes about Citizenship**



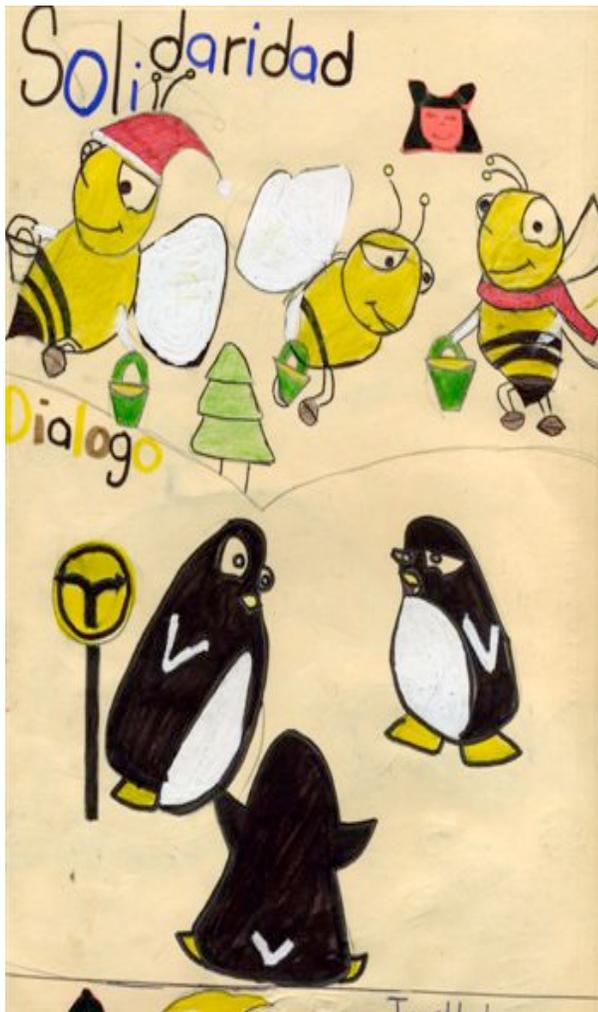
**The Citizenship Wall**



**Preparing the speech**



**The Youth Parliament**



## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP ACTION RESEARCH IMPACT PROJECT

### Report

#### 1. Introduction

Our elementary school Ing. Leopoldo Naranjo is one of 5332 existing schools in the state of Nuevo Leon, México. It is one of three privileged schools that have been equipped with the Promethean ACTIVboard, provided thanks to the MirandaNet project, a project that is in effect in our city.

#### 2. - Reference

All Projects in Mexican basic education schools focus on aspects like School Organization, Classroom Work, Teaching Methods, and Community Participation. School Projects try to solve the problems related with the three aspects mentioned before, but taking as a base the teaching and learning problems.

Therefore, the purposes of this action research project in Nuevo Leon, Mexico are:

- To fortify the teaching and learning process in relation to reading and learning; we are aiming to achieve this goal by promoting the construction of knowledge, collaborative classroom work, diversity respect and the ICT use to develop a moral, intellectual and physical autonomy in our students and at the same time to influence in the community transformation.
- To build family and community participation in our schools to make stronger our School Projects and results.

To transform the schools into a formative and participatory place for the community, providing elements to answer and solve the challenges and social problems involved in the citizenship concept.

#### 3. - About my school

##### 3.1. - Mission:

**To promote and help the students integral development trough quality educational process, like:**

- To achieve the established attainment goals in Educational Programs of Mexican Elementary School.
- To develop the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge for present and future life situations.
- To respect human diversity and to promote equity and human rights respect.

##### 3.2.- Perspective:

**My school is an institution where:**

The head teacher, teachers, secretary and janitor are very prepared for working with children, using the correct educational method for:

- The students' development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that they use in their lives.
- The team work (students-teachers-community) is part of the daily routine.

- ✓ We practice and promote all the international values like: Tolerance, Perseverance, Honesty, Equity, Respect, Democracy, Responsibility, Solidarity, Justice.
- ☑ All the educational staff, the students and the community participate in a knowledge society.
- ☑ The use of the technology can help to modify the teacher practicing and involve all the participants in a Global Citizenship.

**3.3.- Social economic context of my group**

I am teacher of the 5th grade, in my group there are 30 students. All live in a low middle economical level.

| Questions                        | Ing. Leopoldo Naranjo        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Live with both parents           | 60%                          |
| Parents academic level           | 46% primary<br>46% secondary |
| Occupation                       | Employees and housewives     |
| Parent's age                     | Between 30 - 38 years        |
| Do they live in their own house? | 89%                          |
| Do they have t.v.?               | 100%                         |
| Do they have computer?           | 0                            |
| Time to study at home.           | 25 min. to 1.45 hr.          |

**4. - Line of Investigation**

The schools' theme for the Project as well as in my classroom relates mainly to the following question: **What impact will the use of interactive white boards have on teaching and learning the subject of Citizenship in students from a low socioeconomic status?**

**4.1- Before using the IWB**

The subject was not of great interest to the students even though it was about learning their rights and responsibilities as Mexican children. The aim was for them to acquire and practice each and every one of the universal values. The explanations that were given were like words that the wind took, useless.



#### 4.2.- With the use of the IWB

Nonetheless, the situation made a 360 degree turn and the classes will never be the same. Our classroom counts with the use of the IWB since April 5<sup>th</sup> and each time the students are showing more interest for this and other subjects.



For the purpose of this line of investigation the remaining portion of the academic school year was divided into three periods. In each period, two special activities were conducted in order to collect data for the report.

#### 4.2.1 – 1st Period for the month of April

##### 4.2.1.1 Classroom theatre representations.

During this time, inter full in our city a misfortune occurred that went against the universal values. A woman of vengeance burned alive her friend's son. The child survived and they are going give the woman a jail sentence. This news caused great shock among the students and they could not stop talking about it. Thus, I decided to do some research using the local newspaper's website. Once I found the information, I presented it to the students by using the IWB. The children requested the opportunity to give the pyromaniac woman a jail sentence. That day many of the students did not take their recess time with the purpose of staying and continuing investigating more in depth the news so that they could place it in view the next day.

The students showed so much enthusiasm like never before, they did all that was needed for the completion of the work.



**Conclusion:** In this occasion, the use of the IWB was motivational and informative for the students. Through its use they were able to inform themselves about the events that occurred at a local level and from which they were able to make conscious the values such as respect and justice, something many people have come to forget.

The activity is categorized as: Excellent

#### 4.2.1.2. - Design of comics and other writing forms on citizenship topics.

For this activity there was a school wide assembly in which each grade had to place on the school patio wall a comic (character) that represented a universal value. In order to complete this activity, the students at my charge prepared a simple PowerPoint presentation. They then took every class to the classroom where the IWB is placed so that they could listen to what the activity was about via the PowerPoint. The students in my class were in charge of showing them diverse images related to universal values that I had left on the net so that each class with the help of the teacher could choose which image would be placed on the patio wall.



**Conclusion:** It was a school activity organized by my class in which the students were given all access to the use of the IWB. I believe that each time they learn more how to manage for themselves the IWB. I think that not long will pass for them to completely understand the functions that this technological tool have built in.

#### 4.2.2 Second Period for the month of May

In our city, it is very common to participate in contests in which schools from the same sector compete. Two of the contests of vital importance that many of the schools wish to win are: Interpretation of the Mexican National Anthem and Youth Parliament.

##### 4.2.2.1 Interpretation of the Mexican National Anthem

In this contest, our school has always placed last. We would practice in the school patio with a simple player and cassette. In order that the students would be able to learn the lyrics, we would paste posters with the lyrics of the national anthem on the wall and still the results were always embarrassing.

However, in this occasion things were different, we taught them in the IWB classroom. The children could see the lyrics, hear the music, and sing the national anthem. It was fun for all of them, so much that from always being 8<sup>th</sup> and last place we obtained 2<sup>nd</sup> place this time. The difference is considerably evident.

##### 4.2.2.2.- Youth Parliament

In this contest a student between the ages of 11-12 was prepared with a values theme. Previously this fell into a memorization activity without any sense for the student because he just repeated the words that the teacher had taught her. In this occasion the

student by seeing the values theme through the IWB was able to make her speech and was able to learn it little by little through the use of the IWB.



The day of the speech 36 students participated and at the moment that my student presented her speech about the value of honesty, a judge yelled out that he could not believe that a child of that age could think such beauty regarding values. She placed second in the competition. At the end of all this she explained to all that were present that without the help of the new technology, she would not have been able to do such as a good performance.

#### 4.2.3. - Third period for the month of June

##### 4.2.3.1.- School citizenship.

By watching civil themes through the use of the IWB, we came across the theme of responsibility in the school. We decided to form a school security team composed of students from grade five and six. Each week they entered data such as students with bad behavior during recess, student unpunctuality and such information was introduced into the school system.



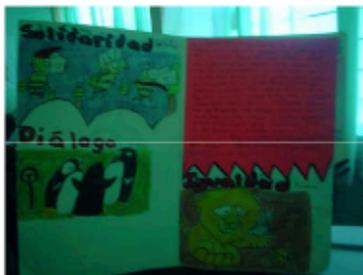
Then, one day a teacher in charge of many schools in the sector found out about our project and decided to make an official ceremony and give them school security uniforms in recognition of the labor that the students were performing for the school.

### 3.2.3.2. - Value Formation

To end the citizenship theme it was decided to make a class in which the students could observe all the values that they had learned about during the last months. As teacher responsible for the project I decided to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the students in which all the values acquired were shown. They had to form groups to play a rally and find clues to decipher each of the values. Following the activity, we worked with images pertaining to each value such as Batman-Justice.



The children made a promise to continue practicing the values for the rest of their lives and finished a folder containing all the materials relating to values learned throughout the academic year.



### 3.3 Next academic year obstacles

The next year academic year consists of the months of August 2005 through June 2006. The students will be promoted to the next and final year of elementary schooling. At this time I will be placed in their new grade level so that, there can be continuity in the project.

One of the biggest obstacles that I will face next year will be having the students wanting to use the IWB for all the subjects. They like it so much they do not leave it for a single second. For this reason, I will have to carefully plan the themes I will teach during the next academic year.

A personal obstacle is learning more about how to work with the IWB. It is an obstacle they has to do with managing the most basic tools of the program and having a better fluency of the English language so that I can maintain a more effective communication with the other participants from the other countries that form the working team of MirandaNet.

### **3.4. - Conclusions**

Forming students that the conscious of the world's existence in a wide sense that are respectful and will have ability to value cultural, biological and social diversity is a task relatively simple if you can count with the use of technology within the classroom because it amplifies the horizons of the imagination and understanding of the students.

I now see a change in my students. I see in them more responsible individuals for their actions, individuals ready to act to make the world more equitable, individuals interested in working on a computer and the acquisition of a second language. They are interested in being able to communicate with you. It does not satisfy them that I do the bridge that builds the gap between the groups. They are individuals that want to know other forms of life, customs of other groups, and who hold in high regard the name of their school and their country.

In the name of my students and myself, many thanks.

**Fabiola Araiza**

**July 2005**