



IT motivated students to participate in elections

Brazil

Project name:
Student Council Elections

Teacher:
Katia Ramos

School:
Francisco Ferreira de Freitas State
School, Serra Azul

Learning areas:
History, Portuguese and Mathematics

Objectives:
To promote student use of technology
in the election process for the school's
Student Council, making their digital
inclusion possible and viable

Outcomes:
Students participated in the school life
and became more conscious and
responsible citizens

“The insertion of technology made the election process more attractive and dynamic, fostering interest, motivation and participation among the students.”

— Katia Ramos, Francisco Ferreira de Freitas State School

The Student Council Elections project was developed in a public school located in Serra Azul, and it includes the electronic voting system, developed and used by the students, describing on the way all the aspects of the voting process to the future voters and participants in the future social and political life in Brazil.



Situation

The School Student Council is an organization that represents the interests of students, with civic, cultural, educational, sport and social objectives. When students participate in the School Student Council they are defending their interests and at the same time learning about ethics, politics and citizenship in everyday life. The Student Council Elections project was developed in a public school located in a small town called Serra Azul in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, coordinated by the history teacher, and included the school's principal, several other teachers and the entire student body of 650 Junior High and High School students.

The project is highly innovative because technology was used as a learning tool by the students in each step of the process – not as a teaching tool by the teacher only. This also allowed the history teacher to work together with her partners on multi-disciplinary or transversal issues, involving several curricular areas, such as History, Mathematics and Portuguese.

“This project is very important because it prepares the students to become conscious and responsible citizens of our country.”

— Katia Ramos, Francisco Ferreira de Freitas State School

Objectives

The project’s objectives were to promote student use of technology in the election process for the school’s Student Council, thus making their digital inclusion possible and viable, and to show that technology can facilitate the student participation in school life and prepare them to become conscious and responsible citizens of the greater society.

The history teacher promoted debates in her classroom to discuss the history of student movements, the mechanisms of citizen participation in society and the importance of the Student Council in the school, while in Portuguese classes the students worked with Microsoft Office Word to create opinion articles, advertisements and campaign materials. In math classes the students developed research on the election process and used Microsoft Office Excel to create voting maps and to graph the result of the election. On a more technical side, the school’s Computer Lab’s Trainee developed the electronic ballot with the help of the students, while the final election results were presented using Microsoft Office PowerPoint. Research, analysis and chart elaboration on the election process and results was done by students, who also wrote texts and articles to promote results from the polls.

Outcomes

In terms of student learning outcomes, it is important to highlight that the students learned a lot and enjoyed their learning, because they were involved in all phases of the project as protagonists in the process. They developed important basic skills in the areas of reading, writing, communications, logical thinking and information access and organization, as well as technological skills in the use of Microsoft Office products. Another interesting administrative and, perhaps, political outcome of this project was the reopening of the School’s Computer Lab and the insertion of the project in the political and pedagogical agenda of the school. Because the results were successful, teachers came up with a plan to increase the use of the Computer Lab in other activities at the school. Also, the electronic ballot system created in the project will probably be used by other schools in Serra Azul, and throughout the region, involving over 2000 students.

“This project is very important because it prepares the students to become conscious and responsible citizens of our country. The insertion of technology made the election process more attractive and dynamic, fostering interest, motivation and participation among the 650 students”, says Katia Ramos, the teacher from Francisco Ferreira de Freitas State School. Through this project the students accomplished the goals set by the National Curricular Parameters (PCN) in the Brazilian Educational System such as: citizenship, social participation, community-school integration, reading, writing and problem solving.