

# CASE STUDY FORM

## “Education/Art/ICT: Integration and Development”

### TITLE

Title of the project/course/experience

From patchwork to machine: Real children learn in virtual worlds

### CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

General framework: institution name/working group and/or individual commitment.

School: Nursery school

Ideazione e progettazione a cura di Linda Giannini

The work is original in its kind because it involves children interacting in tri-dimensional chat-lines with adults, who are willing to "virtually" realize - with 3D constructions - the children's desires.

From little everyday objects and games to the mystery of the big object and the computer game.

This project provides a soft approach, designed for children, taking account of their need to touch and handle in order to understand.

A simple path towards the concepts of "symbol" and "virtual reality" so that what appears on the screen can be treated as something tangible

- to be copied, cut out, stuck on and moved around.... just like what children enjoy doing with objects.

### AIMS

General goals of the project/course/experience.

The following is a research work, since adults are engaged in verifying the impact of new communication technologies in children, taking note of behavior, hypotheses, graphic realizations, as well as of the memory itself of such experience. A mixed community is thereby created, involving: teachers, parents, children, and people not directly related to the school world. Communication occurs via chat, e-mail and telephone, giving rise to a strong social interaction.

This new solution of virtual community for the (3-5 years old) child has a strong social-educational and pedagogic impact. We believe that this virtual community is well suited for reflections on experience and on the analysis of the behavior resulting from it.

New solutions for virtual (and real) communities - Internet for the child **"What is real, what is virtual and what do we mean as *image* of something which is real?"**

Philosophers and scientists have long debated it, and we do not pretend to answer this question: we would only like, with the opportunity we have, to tell you how school-children aged three, four and five are working on these questions, and how they are interacting with a tri-dimensional chat: Active Worlds.

## **METHODS and MEANS**

Methodology/approach + technologies/instruments used in the project/course/experience.

### **Educational Methodologies:**

- Research
- Exploration
- Comparison
- Hypotheses-formulation

### **Technology tools and Software:**

- Pentium 200 Computer
- XP Computer
- ADSL
- Explorer browser
- Eudora electronic mail system
- IncrediMail mail system [http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/0203/edu\\_unisa.htm](http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/0203/edu_unisa.htm)
- Scanner HP
- Laser and inkjet printers
- Digital camera
- TV
- Video projector
- Video tapes
- Educational CD
- Encyclopaedia (Multimedia and printed)
- Tape recorder
- Audio cassettes
- Word 98

for Web-page creation and production of letters to be sent as e-mail attachments

### **Graphics Techniques:**

- Water color
- Alcohol color
- Pencil color
- Wax color
- Paint

## OUTCOMES

Concrete practical exercises/activities/products.

The project of online documentation of children's experiences in nursery school has a first fundamental aim: evaluating and sharing learning skills, by using one or more collaborating environments, composed of subjects physically close or physically apart.

A web of exchanges has been activated among schools and with other institutions and families around common projects in order to:

- compare methodologies;
  - create conscious and active children-children and adults-children interaction;
  - encourage the creativity and the development of an interactive community.
- Educational and didactical paths through ITC have been carried out and take into consideration:
- children's needs to express and to communicate through various techniques;
  - teachers' work in previous years (linked with past experiences);
  - paths previewed by the educational programming and by POF;
  - formative and didactic opportunities offered by the development of the multimedia industry.

### Didactic objectives:

- to collect, to elaborate and to interpret data;
- to describe situations, problems and to devise solutions;
- to develop the skills to communicate intentionally and creatively;
- to present to the others the results paths.

### Activity

- MicroMondi
- Didactic software
- Communication data transmission (surf on linens, e-mail and chat)

[http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/virtual\\_en/aw.htm](http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/virtual_en/aw.htm)

[http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/aw\\_en/index.htm](http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/aw_en/index.htm)

<http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/nir99.html>

[http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/99\\_00\\_virtual.htm](http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/99_00_virtual.htm)

[http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/0203/narnia\\_aw.htm](http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/0203/narnia_aw.htm)

## TIPS FROM EXPERIENCE/TRANSFERABILITY/RECOMMENDATION

What can be transferred to other educational contexts and/or suggestions based on pros and cons deduced from experience.

I believe that that this experience has been very important for such small children. It lays the foundation for a constructive opening to the outside world, through the Internet, and it enables adults to verify the degree of comprehension reached, with respect to the differences between reality, fantasy and virtuality.

Primary goal of this experience is the search of a "reading method" aware of the elements of reality in which children are set into, who are often influenced by messages constituted of complex codes (images, animations, tridimensional models, sounds) of difficult interpretation and orientation. In the current school year, we will continue with observations, data saving and online games.

In this latter period, I am verifying if the method of observation and reading of virtual elements is assimilated and re-elaborated with success during a significant time span. Technology and production methods

## CONTACTS

Name, Institution, Address, Telephone, Fax, email

Project website: [http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/aw\\_en/index.htm](http://www.descrittiva.it/calip/aw_en/index.htm)

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