

## Evidence of Impact

# Participant Profile: Liz Canales

## Grade 5 Teacher from Ortega Elementary School (Austin, Texas) Describes How the Intel® Teach Program Has Affected Her Classroom Practice

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### Initial Expectations

When I first heard of the Intel® Teach program, I really didn't have a set expectations other than that I was going to learn new ways to integrate technology into my classroom.

I got really excited about it when I got into the program, because it was a lot of fun, a lot of headaches, but a lot of fun. When I finished the program, though, I kind of had mixed feelings about it. Part of me was thinking, oh good, I get that afternoon off, but part of me was also thinking, now what can I do with what I have learned? I started thinking about other parts of my curriculum and what things I could do with it, and how I could really use the technology as a tool to make that curriculum so much richer.

### Program Impact Five Years After the Training

Since the Intel training, I've done so much with computers, and I've become more flexible in how I use them. For example, before the training, I always felt that if we were using the computers, all the kids needed to be on the computers at the same time, and that just got frustrating and didn't work.

When we really started integrating the curriculum and working as teams in the Intel training, we found ways to organize the class so that one group could be working on one step of the process while another group could be working on another step, so different groups would be ready for the computers at different times. It doesn't matter if you have only four computers in the classroom.

### Troubleshooting and Problem Solving

When I went into the training, I had a surface knowledge of Microsoft PowerPoint\*, some of the basics, but a lot of the kids in the class knew a lot more than me about how to do things. I know that some of the teachers in the training also struggled a great deal, but, because we worked together as teams, we also had to problem solve together.

Going through that problem solving process as a group made us more aware of how the kids are feeling when they're at the computer and they're raising their hands for five minutes and you still haven't made it to them, because you're helping problem solve with another group.

It also helped that our facilitator would ask us questions instead of giving us answers. It helped show us how to do that with the kids, to help them really start learning how to problem solve on the computer and how to find answers themselves.

## Technology Integration

The program shows teachers how to use a computer as a tool. So many teachers currently and in the past have used the computer as a big box to teach computer skills. They teach keyboarding and have the kids use it as a word processor, which is really just a glorified typewriter.

With this program, you work with a group, take a problem, take some of the things that you need to teach, and you figure out ways to really integrate what the computer has to offer, to use it to help teach your curriculum.

For example, you might have the kids put together a presentation to show what they have learned and organize their research instead of using a standard written report. It's a way for kids who are visual learners to present what they know and understand. You might have kids use spreadsheets and use the information in the spreadsheets as graphs, to help them really understand math skills or understand and organize scientific observations.

## Collaborative Learning

One of the interesting things I noticed about the program was that we kind of just ended up in particular groups,

## Multimedia Civil War Museum

We had three classes at my school work together to create a Civil War museum to display for the whole school. Students could choose how to present subtopics within the Civil War. Most of the students used search engines to find information, but they all had different options for how to present the information.

Three groups did slide shows on the computer. One group created museum brochures on the computer. This group created a whole brochure about all of the different exhibits that the other students had made, so they had to go around and find out what the exhibits were and what work was behind them. Some students chose to not use the computer, such as a group that made a freedom quilt. We had a really multifaceted museum, just like the museums of today, in which you might see a variety of media, such as video displays, artifacts, or historical documents.

With our Civil War museum, I was able to tap into what I had gotten out of the Intel program in finding different ways for the kids to use the technology to research, work together as teams, problem solve, and to think through how they might want to present their information.

Some students who originally thought they wanted to do something on the computer actually realized that this tool was not really the best way to present their information. The girls who made the freedom quilt realized that what they wanted to share didn't lend itself to a slide show on a computer. On the other hand, another group that was working on submarines realized that they were not having much success building a model and that they would be better off using visuals on the computer.

So I think from the program, I learned a lot of different ways during the year to teach the students how the computer and the camera and the scanners and all of the different things we can use, how these tools can help them learn more and present what they've learned in the way that's most appropriate.

and I didn't necessarily end up with people I really wanted to work with. That happens with our students, and that happens in any job unless you are really, really lucky. Going through that process made me see that I've got to be really patient with this person, and I've got to just listen, and I've got to give my feedback and explain what I'm thinking. And going through that process also made me a lot more patient with the students.

I had already been through some training with working with kids in collaborative groups, but it really helped me organizationally, because so many times when I had done group work, the groups were basically doing the same thing. With technology, sometimes groups need to be doing different things.

We do a lot of differentiation in schools now, because all the kids are at different levels and have different needs. It helped me to see more ways to have the kids work on different things depending on where they were at the time in that subject area and to help them work at a level that was most appropriate for them. Whether I had them on the computers, working on a project in their science notebook, or working on a math poster, it helped me really reconsider the levels and what kind of output and product I was going to expect from the students.

## Empowering Teachers

I think before I went through the Intel Teach program, I was kind of scared of the computers. I used them as word processors or to do some basic things, such as slide shows. But I really didn't feel confident enough with other types of tasks that I could do with the computers to hand them over to the kids and be the person who was going to be able to help them. I felt like I was going to give an assignment to the kids, and then I was not going to know how to help them.

When I went through the program, I felt like, you know what? I can do a lot of this! I can find answers. I can use the Help menu. I know how to research things. I know how to solve it.