

**The MexLinks Consortium for
Technology Access and
Educational Advancement:
Applying Internet2**



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Overview: With sponsorship from the **UC Mexus Program** and **Conacyt México**, faculty researchers and students from universities in México and the U.S. are using Internet2 resources to facilitate communication and research on after school computer clubs serving youths and adults in both countries as part of a collaborative known as **MexLinks**.



Mexlinks consortium 1994-2002

- Establishment of discussion groups and participation in existing lists - 1994-present
 - *In situ* exchanges between researchers
 - Joint undertakings (research projects, workshops, 5th Dimension sites)
 - Bilingual Electronic Seminar 1997-1999
 - Bilingual Electronic Seminar via Internet2 (2002)
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Context

- Exponential increase in available information (*Information Society*)
- Increase of demands on schools and schooling
- Mismatch between available technology and knowledge base of users



Context


- Increase in technology access distributed unevenly across social groups and countries
- Initial optimism has given way to a more realistic appraisal of possibilities and limitations of technology
- Need to understand more deeply the affordances provided by interconnectivity



National and Transnational Issues:

Our target populations in México and the U.S. are Mexicano origin children and families who have had limited opportunities to benefit from the education system in both countries. In both countries these are often families with low incomes, limited parental formal educational levels, and low access to computers in home settings. In the U.S. the target population consists of many families who have immigrated to the U.S. from México in search of employment.

The target populations in both countries share a common linguistic and cultural heritage, and a rich ongoing need for intercommunication and sharing of resources tied to development of families and communities across national boundaries.



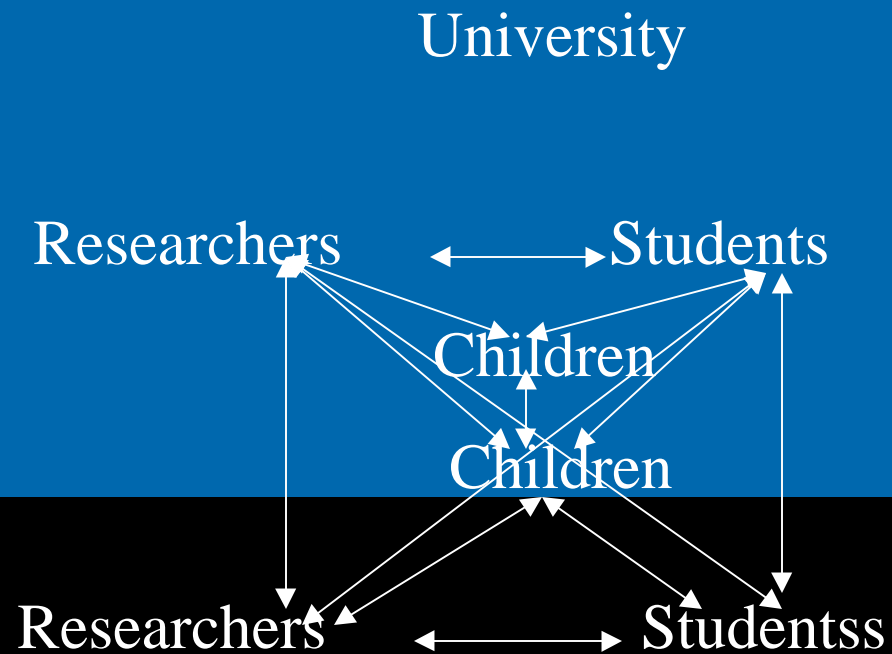
MexLinks after school computer sites supplement and enrich the everyday schooling of children by having them engage in learning activities mediated by technology. These activities feature use of higher order thinking and communication skills supporting educational progress up through secondary school and preparation for college.



Research network and activity system

➤ Activities

- web pages
- mail
- seminars
- workshops
- exchanges



University

Decorative blue circular patterns, resembling ripples or concentric circles, are located at the bottom of the slide.

Using electronic media for interconnectivity - Internet 2

- Multidisciplinary bilingual seminar: February to July, 2002
- 5 sessions of real-time connection
- Topic: Children's cognitive and sociolinguistic development and access to education



Diversity of Participants

- Disciplines: psychology, (socio)linguistics, anthropology education, communications
- Countries: México, Estados Unidos
- 6 “institutions” (UCSB, UCSD, UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, BUAP, UNAM)
- Cross-level: researchers, graduate students, undergraduates



Problems and challenges

- Technological imbalances
- Language
- Cultural differences
- Differences stemming from diverse disciplinary backgrounds
- Coordination (working across time zones)
- Interaction management (turns, balance, equipresence)



Affordances

- Convert problems into moments or opportunities for learning
- “Form follows failure”
- Revise strategies and practices, fit interaction to medium



Next Steps

In the next academic year we plan to implement a bilingual seminar involving additional students from each site

We will also implement:

Site research exchanges

Exchanges among children and community members

