



It was the second Sugar Day in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I was seated among the assistants when a man entered, dressed in a suit and carrying two children's backpacks. It appeared one was for a boy and the other for a girl. They were a powerful attention getter because this person had no child with him. He was Alejandro Fernández. And he told us this wonderful story.

This happened in La Plata, the capital city of the province of Buenos Aires.

Alejandro had participated with his daughter in learning the guitar using the Suzuki method. This method requires that a parent learn the instrument along with the child so that the child will learn music in a way similar to the way they learn to speak: by imitating the sounds.

Alejandro's wife, Analía De Biase, is a preschool teacher at the preschool Our Lady of the Rose in La Plata. When she saw the Suzuki method of teaching and learning in action, she proposed translating it to teach the use of the XO computer to small children and their families. "Usually teaching technology separates the generations instead of uniting them," Alejandro said.

So she took three XOs she received as donations to her preschool class. Most of the children had no previous contact with a computer. The group of three-year-olds, together with Analía, explored the small computers. They learned to turn them on and to take photos.

The next step was to make a picture-chart that told the children how they could teach their parents to do the same thing. The children chose the pictures and the correct order they needed to put them in.

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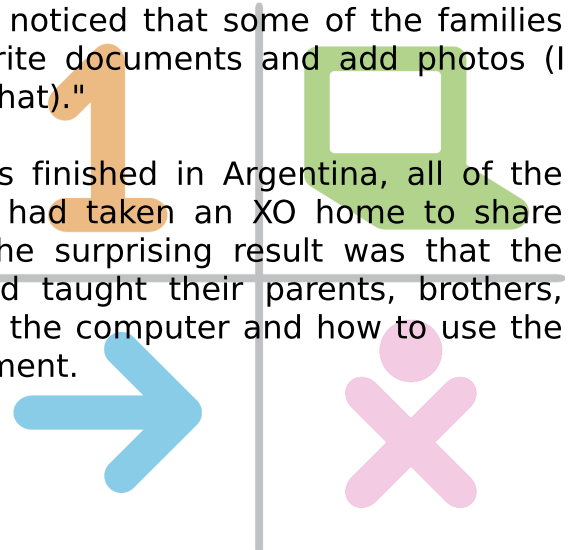
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In Argentine preschools, one typical activity is called "El Cuaderno Viajero...The Traveling Notebook" in which a folder or notebook is passed among the children's homes, spending several days in each. While they have the notebook, the family writes things about their pets and family members or use it to exchange cooking recipes, poems and songs. Sometimes they even include photos.

Two or three children at a time took an XO to their homes in little children's backpacks, together with a notebook for their families to write in. The assignment was for the children to teach their families how to turn on the XO, take some photos and film a video. After they had explored the computer, they were to write something in the notebook that accompanied the laptop.

Alejandro told us that when the XOs came back to class they made a backup copy of all the things the family had recorded. Then they went to another family. "One day I was looking at their files and I noticed that some of the families had discovered how to write documents and add photos (I still don't know how to do that)."

When the school year was finished in Argentina, all of the children in the classroom had taken an XO home to share with their families. And the surprising result was that the three-year-old children had taught their parents, brothers, and sisters how to turn on the computer and how to use the XO to complete the assignment.



one
laptop
per
child

