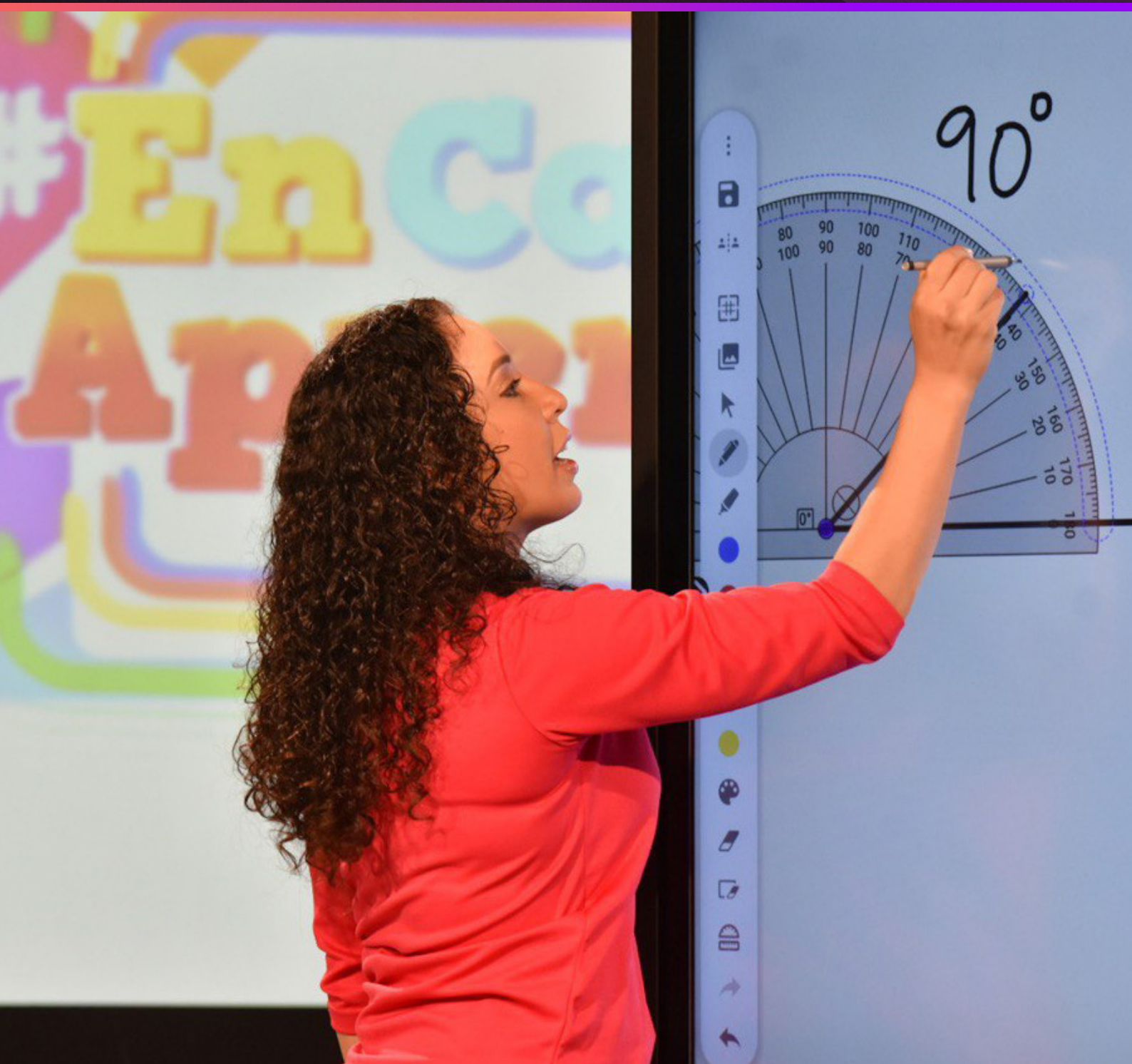


## Customer story

Puerto Rico



# Partnership between technology and television delivers education in Puerto Rico

At the time COVID broke out, Puerto Rico was still recovering from Hurricane Maria, which had caused significant damage three years before. Communication infrastructure wasn't fully restored across the island, and many areas had unreliable or no internet access. So, when the government implemented strict quarantine orders in response to the pandemic, many of Puerto Rico's teachers and students were locked down at home without the ability to connect to online learning.

Faced with a monumental challenge, the Department of Education looked to Puerto Rico's public television station, WIPR-Channel 6, for help. "They had no idea how they were going to reach so many people simultaneously, including the ones that did not have internet access. So, television was there to support them and provide the solution. At the end of the day, we are a public station in service to Puerto Ricans, and it was our mission to be first responders to them," said José Juan Pérez-Velázquez, WIPR producer. Transmitted into every home, WIPR was an accessible platform that could reach all students.

## Television and teachers rally to keep students learning

While WIPR began scheduling daily education programming, the teachers selected to give lessons

on-camera went to the station to practice before filming began. High School Mathematics Teacher, Marcel Ruiz noticed that the station had very limited technology to facilitate lesson delivery. WIPR had several LCD screens, but those displays didn't allow teachers to supplement lessons with interactive resources.

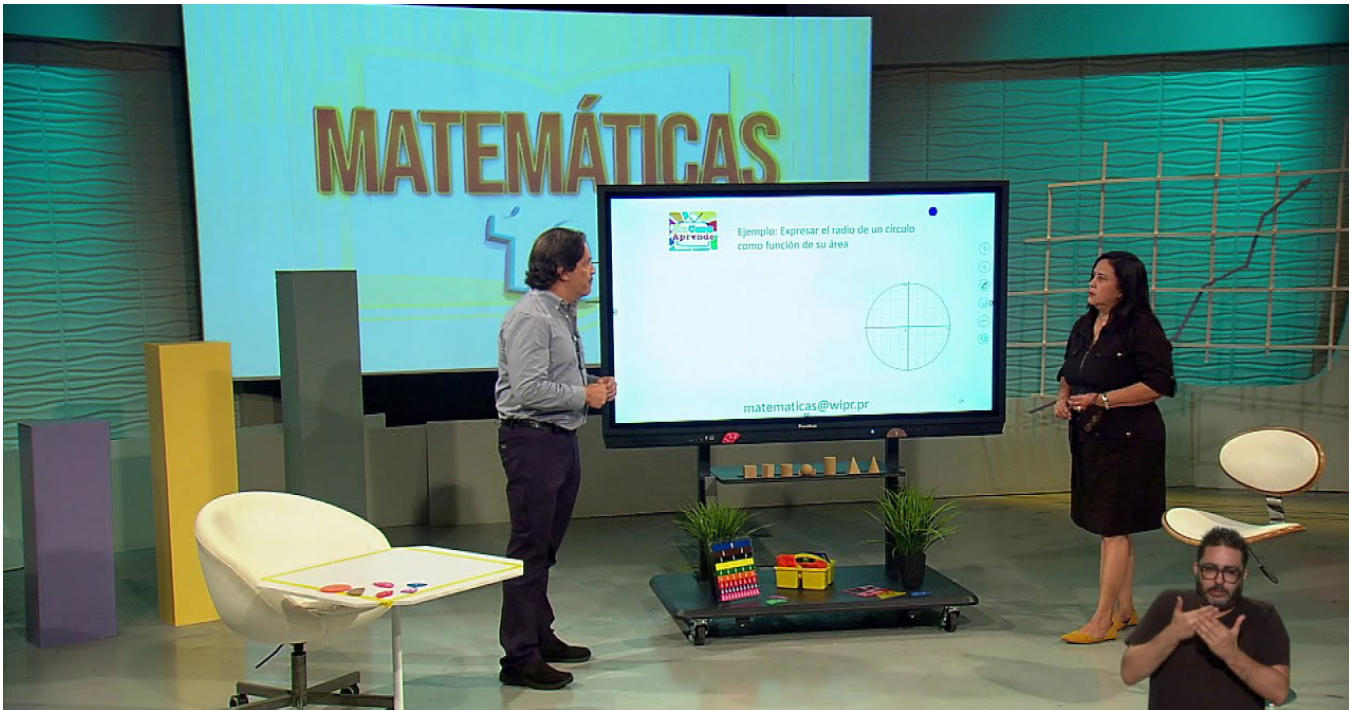
Ruiz had used an ActivPanel in his classroom and had previously been a workshop host for Promethean's Puerto Rican partner, Case Solutions. He knew the interactive display would be the perfect conduit for dynamic and engaging lessons, but time was moving rapidly. They needed to act fast to find a technical solution. "It was a very difficult situation. We were in a rush," said Ruiz. "I already knew the panel and was used to working with it." Ruiz quickly connected Pérez-Velázquez with Lourdes Cordero Machado, Chairwoman and Owner of Case Solutions. Deeply committed to education, Cordero Machado was quick to invite WIPR to come see the panel. "We thought, we have to give this a shot," said Pérez-Velázquez. "We went to the showroom, played with the panel, and said, 'oh my, this is it!' It took us out of a dark situation about a week before starting to roll the shows." Case Solutions and WIPR came to a cooperative agreement, and three panels were swiftly sent to the station.

“The panels arrived at the channel just a few days before we started rolling the show,” said Ruiz. “All the teachers love the ActivPanel. They were very happy.” While the teachers were familiar with the edtech displays, Ruiz trained Pérez-Velázquez and station engineers on how to use them. Intuitive and easy to use, the WIPR team learned quickly. During training, the engineers discovered they could not only film teachers working on the ActivPanel, but the panel could be connected directly to the camera feed. This allowed what was on the interactive display to be seen fully on television screens. With the technology challenge solved, it was time to film the lessons and get kids back to learning.

## Innovative tele-education delivers nearly 3,000 classes

In the first season of #EnCasaAprendo, or At Home, I Learn, 225 episodes covering all subjects for kindergarten through fifth grade, plus math for sixth through 12th grades, aired on televisions in students’ homes across Puerto Rico. As the pandemic continued, so did classes on WIPR, and in the second season, an additional 1,404 classes were broadcasted. By the third season, classes included Spanish, English, mathematics, science, and elementary subjects, and the station produced an additional 1,253 episodes. After airing during the daytime, “the shows reran at night to make sure students had the chance to connect to them regardless of what they were doing in their private lives,” said Pérez-Velázquez.





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José Juan Pérez-Velázquez

Additionally, the programs were available for students and their families to stream on-demand. On YouTube™ alone, the shows reached over 3 million viewers.

In the combined three seasons, more than 1,600 hours of educational programming were delivered to students, all using the ActivPanel to engage and enrich lessons. In addition to WIPR’s local territory, #EnCasaAprendo reaches national and international markets through WIPR’s smart app PRTV+. Communities in Argentina, Spain, Illinois, New York, California, and Florida, among many other states and countries, watch #EnCasaAprendo through PRTV+.

It also spurred additional tele-education programming on WIPR, including Lab Six, a science show for fourth to sixth grades and La Fórmula STEAM, a science-meets-art show for the whole family.

### **Educating multiple generations of Puerto Ricans**

To gauge the success of the program, WIPR surveyed viewers. What they learned was remarkable. Not only were the shows keeping students engaged, but lessons were so captivating, that they were being watched by whole families, together. WIPR also found that the classes were being watched by an unexpected group of Puerto Ricans.

“Kids, parents, and to our surprise, grandparents,” said Pérez-Velázquez. “They were living experiences they did not have before. They had never gone to school, so this was their first glimpse at what it’s actually like.”

WIPR received high praise for its educational programming. “Twice, we received the invitation from the American Public Television Stations organization to share our story with other stations as a way to engage with education during emergencies,” Pérez-Velázquez shared. “Also, given the reach we have gained within the last few years, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting is bumping up our Community Service award grant. And, it’s all because of how technology and television met in the service of education. And by technology, I don’t mean the broadcast signal; I mean the Promethean panels which delivered the content to the students.”

### **Edtech opens doors for more tele-education**

Building on the success of #EnCasaAprendo and the station’s innovative use of the ActivPanel, more education-focused programming is coming to WIPR. The station is planning a wider range of shows and intends to use the panel to incorporate gamification as a way to further engage learners and enhance programs going forward.

Beyond educational programming, the station has other innovative plans for the ActivPanel. WIPR found the displays to be so easy to use and robust in functionality, they are incorporating the panels into standard broadcasting. For example, in news, politics, and weather segments, the annotation function has been an extremely useful tool. The screen can not



only be shown behind a newscaster or program host as they work on it, but it can be integrated into the broadcast feed. “We were going to buy some LED monitors to use interactively with a computer. But then the panels arrived. So, now we are changing out the LED monitors for Promethean panels as well,” said Pérez-Velázquez.



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