



*The ProActive team wishes you happy holidays!*

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*This newsletter aims to keep people informed of the progress made in the ProActive project. It is a three monthly communication available both in print and digital format.*

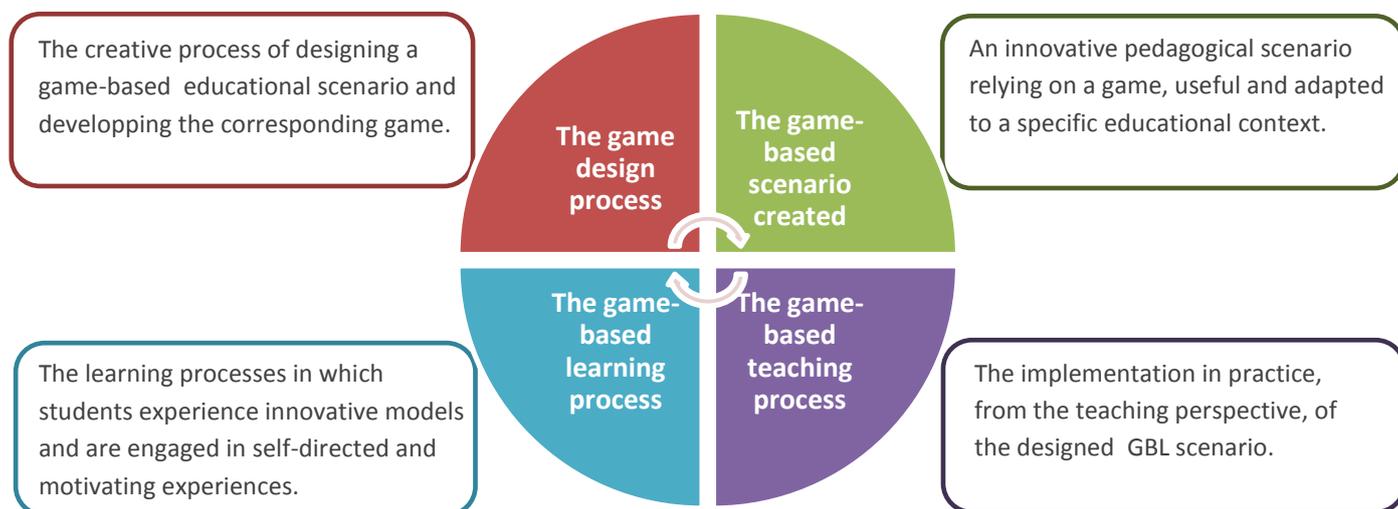
[www.proactive-project.eu](http://www.proactive-project.eu)

## THE PROACTIVE APPROACH

PROACTIVE (**Fostering Teachers' Creativity through Game-Based Learning**) is a European project which started in January 2010. Through a constructivist approach, the project will create learning contexts where teachers and trainers can apply creativity in designing their own game-based learning (GBL) scenarios by using digital tools.

*ProActive will offer to teachers and trainers the possibility to use GBL as an innovative and imaginative approach in their teaching practices, so to enable them to create learning environments interesting and engaging for their students.*

The consortium has already developed the pedagogical framework that will guide the project's activities. It is rooted into extended literature reviews on the topics of creativity, GBL, game design for educational purposes, and learning theories. It is also based on the outcomes from fifteen workshops in which teachers' and trainers' current practices, interests, expectations, attitude and opinion towards creativity, GBL and teaching methodologies were explored.



### The five learning metaphors

*ProActive bases on five learning metaphors which will act as guidelines for the participants in the creation of educational games, raising awareness and reflection on different learning models.*

**Acquisition:** It corresponds to the idea traditionally diffused of how we learn. It consists of an expert (the teacher) transferring objective information to a receiver (the student).

**Imitation:** The learner observes and models the behavior and attitudes of an expert to learn a skill.

**Participation:** It focuses on social aspects of learning activities, where students co-create knowledge. Thus, learning occurs through interacting with peers.

**Experimentation:** Learning occurs through repetition and practice of a specific skill in a safe environment.

**Discovery:** The learner interacts with mediating artifacts, and combines previous knowledge, in order to create new ideas, models and concepts.



## THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

### ProActive participants

*Within ProActive, teachers / trainers of Comenius, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, from four countries (Italy, Romania, Spain and UK), will participate in two days workshops in order to learn how to create their own GBL creative scenarios. Most of these participants have been introduced to ProActive concepts through the focus groups that have been organized in May-June, 2010 by the consortium.*

#### Comenius (School education)

Sixteen centers, mostly primary and secondary schools, will participate in ProActive activities through the University of Barcelona (Spain), Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy) and Centre for Advanced Software Technology Limited (UK).

All Comenius participants have great experience in teaching, and show a high level of interest in using ICT and innovative teaching practices in their classes. The picture below shows some of the Comenius participants supported by UB.



#### Erasmus (higher education)

Eight higher education entities will be involved in ProActive through the University Federico II Napoli (Italy) and University Complutense de Madrid (Spain). They are departments from universities and research centers, interested in introducing new technologies in teaching.

In the pilot sites that would be supported by UCM, the educational scenarios will be created with <e-Adventure> editor. In UNINA's pilot sites, Eutopia editor will be used for creating educational games for teaching soft skills.

#### Leonardo da Vinci (trainers in work settings)

Through the Centre for Advanced Software Technology Limited (UK) and the University of Bucharest (Romania), training institutions working with people with different professional profiles will participate in ProActive.

Trainers are willing to improve their teaching methodologies. They have an extensive experience in working with people, both traditional or computer mediated teaching. Moreover, they want to explore the advantages or limits offered by the GBL and to make training more fun and engaging.



### Some ProActive participants: the UK case

Trainees from the **Libyan oilfields** and **warehouse workers in North Wales** are the latest recruits to ProActive. Two new pilot sites have been added to the list as CAST invites trainers to join the project.

The **Warrington Business School** has well established links with the Libyan Government and runs a number of courses for Libyans who work in the oil industry. These are many and varied but the project is likely to concentrate on game based learning methodology in training for safe operation in the oil fields. Industry related language skills may also feature in courses which will be devised by Jimmy Ormandy, a tutor at the college.

**SOMAC** is a fast growing firm in North Wales and unlike many firms around them, it is increasing its workforce rapidly. New recruits need good training if they are to be effective and repay the investment in them. SOMAC recognises that the impact of a lot of training is lost because of the boring ways in which it is often delivered. Trainers agree there is too much chalk and talk. Trainees want to get involved and want to be busy in sessions. The firm recognises the value of game-based learning. It feels that the game approach will engage trainees more easily and will make what they learn more likely to stick.

## THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

### Project meetings

**Madrid, 10–12<sup>th</sup> of November**

The third PROACTIVE project meeting was held in Madrid within the premises of UCM at an important stage of the project lifecycle, i.e. near the end of its first year. It was a three days event attended by 18 people representing all partners of the consortium.



The aim of the meeting was to assess the work conducted in the past six months of the project, to discuss relevant research issues and take common decisions, to plan in details all further activities, as well as to clarify all relevant administrative and financial issues. The meeting was very productive, with partners presenting their outcomes and brainstorming for finding best solutions for the further project steps.



### Next steps

#### > Training workshops

From February, 2011, ProActive teachers and trainers will participate in two days workshop in their country: together with the research team, they will first learn about the pedagogical and technical approaches of ProActive, including GBL concepts, and the use of the five learning metaphors; then, through a co-design process, they will reflect on the ways to introduce creativity and flexibility into their teaching practices.

#### > Implementation in the field

Once acquainted with ProActive concepts and with the game editors, teachers and trainers will develop their first creative learning games with the provided tools. Initial results of this phase will be reported by all partners in the next project meeting, which will be held in Naples in late June 2011.



### And more...

*First results from ProActive were presented during various international events:*

**The EC-TEL 2010 conference (September 30, 2010).** Prof. Mario Barajas gave the following talk: "From game-based learning to augmented reality learning: Pedagogical Underpinnings of two European Projects", in which ProActive was presented.

**The SINAPSI conference in Rome (October 8, 2010)** on Videogames and simulations as new learning environments. ProActive was presented in order to set the future trends in learning and education.

**The 4th International Conference EDU-WORLD 2010 (University of Pitesti, Romania, 8–9/10/2010).** The paper "GBL in education", whose authors are M. Logofatu, A. Dumitrache and M. Gheorghe (University of Bucharest) was presented during the session on ICT and e-learning in knowledge society. It covers the Romanian study on the current status of GBL usage in Romanian university level education – one of the main results obtained from the Romanian focus groups on GBL within ProActive. The presentation raised interest and discussion between the 15 participants.

## SPECIAL FOCUS: TEACHING CREATIVELY



Creative teaching occurs when a teacher combines existing knowledge in some novel form to get useful results in terms of facilitating student learning. This may be either planned before the act of teaching, or invented as a response to the demands of the learning situation.

Creative and effective teachers rely on a series of sources that include **ICT, real objects, and innovative resources**. They generally do not restrain their lessons to textbooks. They act as "**reflective practitioners**", **supporters and facilitators** that allow the co-construction of knowledge.

Among the factors that influence on the creative teaching, we can find: **personality traits** (willingness to develop, acceptance of new experiences, self-confidence, sense of humour, curiosity, depth of ideas, imagination, etc.); **experiences of growth and education** (self-created games and stories, brainstorming between classmates, etc.); **beliefs in teaching, hard work, motivation**, etc. Indeed, creative teaching involves creative planning of learning activities.

Furthermore, research outline that the efficiency of **student-centred activities**, connection between teaching contents and real life, management of skills in class, open-ended questions, encouragement of creative thinking and use of technology and multimedia.

Thus, teaching creatively might be described as teachers using **imaginative approaches** to make learning more interesting, engaging, exciting and effective. This implies dynamic and active processes, which are **relevant to the curriculum** and lead to **increased understanding of students**.

**GBL is a good candidate to fulfill these requirements**. Indeed, digital games represent a medium to promote active learning and improve students' problem-solving skills. It has been demonstrated that they can increase personal fulfilment and lead to higher performance. ProActive will adopt a GBL design approach to overcome the obstacles of introducing GBL in formal learning settings.



## MEET OUR TEAM

### Dr. Alessandra Talamo

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