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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

INTRODUCING PROACTIVE

an EU Lifelong Learning Programme project

PROACTIVE (Fostering Teachers' Creativity through Game-Based Learning) is a European project which started in January 2010. It aims at fostering creativity and supporting flexibility of trainers working in Lifelong Learning (LLL) sub-programmes. We will create learning contexts where teachers of Comenius, Erasmus and Leonardo programmes can apply creativity in designing their own game-based learning scenarios by using digital tools.

Within training workshops, teachers in 18 pilot sites in four countries will use two main game editors (EUTOPIA and <e-Adventure>) in designing their learning sessions.

developing creative and innovative educational ICT-based practice

Traditionally, teachers and trainers used in their practice a dominant learning paradigm: the instructional, thus limiting their creative potential and inhibiting learning.

Recent studies instead show that in natural situations learners combine simultaneously different metaphors for learning: Imitation, Participation, Acquisition, Experimentation, and Discovery.

Game-based learning (GBL) supports creativity and inquiry-based learning processes. Indeed, games have a positive influence on learners' motivation and interest. They promote active learner involvement through exploration, experimentation, competition and cooperation.

<e-Adventure>editor

<e-Adventure> is a tool for creating adaptable 2D point-and-click adventure games for educational applications.

It is an open source software which contains templates and libraries of visual objects that are used in the production of the scenarios.



It is being developed by the <e-UCM> e-learning research group at Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

For PROACTIVE, an adapted release of <e-Adventure> will be produced, which facilitates the integration of the PROACTIVE learning metaphors.

Read more on www.proactive-project.eu

EUTOPIA editor

EUTOPIA is a platform created to run and manage online, multiplayer games. It implements the psychodrama methodology in a digital "scene". This approach permits to a small group of people to give a theatrical perfor-



mance for educational or psychological purposes (counseling, diagnosis, therapy, coaching and training in soft skills). Each actor (or learner) controls an avatar and interacts with other avatars in a virtual 3D scene.

EUTOPIA has been developed within the framework of projects funded by Lifelong Learning Programme by a joint venture between ISTC CNR and NAC LAB.

Read more on www.proactive-project.eu

THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

Focus groups

In the context of PROACTIVE, 15 focus groups have been organized by the consortium in four different countries. The main objectives were the following: a) to introduce target users to the PROACTIVE project; b) to present to the participants the project's concepts: the five metaphors, creativity in educational contexts, GBL, and the two game editors; c) to identify the interests and needs of teachers / trainers regarding GBL scenarios.

Spain

Two seminars were organized by the Future Learning researchers in Barcelona, in May 2010. The theme - "Creativity and games in the classroom" - attracted not only school teachers, who were the main target audience, but also several researchers and professionals from the area of educational games. In total, 14 people participated in the two seminars.



Moreover, three focus groups were organized in Madrid by UCM in May / June, 2010, focusing on Spanish high education (Erasmus level). Two focus groups were conducted involving 17 professors from the University of Cadiz (UCA). One extra focus group involved 22 students of Computer Science from UCM.



Italy

Two focus groups were conducted in Rome by the "Sapienza" University team in May / June 2010, with high-school teachers. Seven teachers responded to the invitation and were involved in the project as teaching process experts and possible users of EUTOPIA and <e-Adventure> PROACTIVE game editors.

Moreover, two focus groups were organized by the University of Naples in June 2010, involving 14 university and PhD teachers from both the Relational Sciences Department of the University of Naples "Federico II" and the National Council of Research – ISTC of Rome. Teachers showed deep interest in PROACTIVE activities and in the editors employment/adaptation to their own didactic approach.

UK

The CAST team conducted four focus groups in Bangor in May / June 2010. Participants were teachers, trainers and advisers in training and education from Careers Wales, Phoenix School, Tower Hamlets Parental Advisory Service and Ysgol Friars, Bangor. They were introduced to User Centred Design techniques and plan to go on to design games that they will use in their work.

Romania

There were three focus groups conducted by University of Bucharest on May 2010, with 16 participants from Romanian universities. All the participants have a great deal of experience in teaching at the university and also in the pre-university.

The focus groups have been the first step in PROACTIVE towards the co-design and implementation of GBL with teachers. The project has already started to gather a network of practitioners interested in creativity and GBL. Furthermore, the focus-group sessions have resulted in important feedback and improvement suggestions which will guarantee the successful adaptation of the two game editors employed in the project.

THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

Project meetings

Barcelona, 28-29th of January

The PROACTIVE kick-off meeting took place in the University of Barcelona. The six organizations of the consortium were represented.



The meeting enabled us to establish the detailed work plan, as well as all the activities to be conducted within the project. Moreover, all relevant administrative issues were clarified. The PROACTIVE kick-off meeting was a promising start for the project.

Bucharest, 5-7th of July

The second meeting took place in the premises of University of Bucharest. The first day was dedicated to the GBL editors (EUTOPIA and <e-Adventure>) and to developing games scenarios with them.



The second and third days of the meeting were organized around presentations of the work packages

All partners participated and contributed to the success of the event, presenting their work and discussing future plans.

Next steps

> Adaptation of the tools

In response to the focus groups conducted in the project's countries, the two game editors are being adapted to the users' needs.

> Next project meeting

The next project meeting will be held in Madrid on November 10-12, 2010. The consortium will discuss the further steps of the project, and prepare the forthcoming training workshops with the tools.



> Training and co-design workshops in 4 countries

Interested teachers / trainers will participate in workshops in their country lasting 2 days: together with the research team, they will first learn about the pedagogical and technical approaches of PROACTIVE, including the 5 metaphors for natural learning; then, through a co-design process, they will reflect on the ways to introduce creativity and flexibility into their teaching practices and develop their first creative learning games with the provided tools.

And more...

PROACTIVE will be presented at ECTEL 2010 – The Fifth European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning Sustaining Tel: From Innovation to Learning and Practice (Barcelona, 28 Sept. / 1 Oct., 2010) <http://www.ectel2010.org/>

Mario Barajas "From game-based learning to augmented reality learning: Pedagogical Underpinnings of two European Projects"

PROACTIVE will be presented at SINAPSI "Video games and simulations as future learning environments" Conference, CNR, Rome (Oct. 8, 2010)

During a round table experts from the business world will present their viewpoints of on the use of new technology in the Human Resources environment.

New projects, such as PROACTIVE will be presented in order to set the future trends in learning and education. <http://www.nac.unina.it/sinapsi/content/view/30/>

SPECIAL FOCUS: GAME-BASED LEARNING

GBL is an acronym that stands for Game Based Learning. It refers to the use of **computer or video games** of any kind as tools that support **learning** in a meaningful way. Thus, research in GBL is part of a trend which analyses the good characteristics of games together with their relation with learning, and proposes strategies and paradigms to take advantage of them for education.



There is a clear relation between learning and playing digital games. First, their use has been proven to **enhance students' motivation** towards learning. Indeed, games can provide challenging experiences that promote the intrinsic satisfaction of the players. Moreover, in games, the challenge usually increases as long as the game goes on. Therefore players need to improve their skills and learn new strategies until the game is completed. **Actually, players have fun while playing a game because they have to learn it.**

Furthermore, **games often provide short feedback cycles.** This allows players to explore the game environment freely, trying out their hypothesis, learning by trial-and-error and getting immediate information that they can use to redefine wrong assumptions in a risk-free environment. This characteristic is well aligned with educational requirements, given that most educational approaches require the educator to provide students with feedback about their achievements.

As video games set the player in a world that is free to explore without requiring the intervention of an instructor, they are an ideal medium to promote authentic learning and "learning by doing" processes, turning the student into the leader of his / her own learning experience. Thus, games can provide meaningful learning experiences and simulate highly interactive scenarios that professionals encounter in real-world settings, where they face open-ended, real-world problems.

Learn more about GBL, types of games and their specific educational advantages on our website.
▶▶ Visit www.proactive-project.eu

MEET OUR TEAM

Dr. Mario Barajas Frutos

Professor Mario Barajas is the lead investigator of the coordinating team of PROACTIVE. He is a Doctor in Education and professor in the the Department of Didactics at the University of Barcelona. Co-director of the post-graduate course 'Knowledge, Science and citizenship in the Information Society', he teaches in the doctoral programme 'Diversity a Change in education. He coordinates Future Learning.



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