



Game Based Learning for Teachers

Anisoara Dumitrache

University of Bucharest (Romania)

anisoara.dumitrache@credis.ro

Abstract

Game based learning (GBL) is a term frequently used in the last decade, without having a precise definition, but with serious preoccupation on its influence in increasing students' interest on learning, enhancing learning experiences and on the potential of digital games as learning tools. Computer games are ideal medium to promote authentic learning and "learning by doing" [1] and turning the student into the leader of his / her own learning experience. Having this meaning, digital games can provide meaningful learning experiences by simulating highly interactive scenarios that professionals encounter in real-world settings, where they face open-ended, real-world problems (James Paul Gee, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2004).

Nowadays, young people and not only are used to play games. The commercial games market has significantly increased and the offer is very large. Most of the games are very complex, organized on levels, with a rewarding system, laborious actions or activities wrapped up in a challenging story, with well defined rules and with a high quality interface. Despite the preoccupations for the aspects presented previously, these games are developed to entertain players without transmitting any educational message.

In this way, a serious gap appears when teachers interested in introducing games in lessons try to fit some of these in current curricula [2]. On other side, the number of authoring tools which offers the opportunity to create their own game is limited. The ProActive [2] project offered the opportunity to adopt this new pedagogical approach – game based, through two game editors free to be used in educational settings. University of Bucharest as partner in this project was actively involved in project's activities in implementing the games based learning approach in three pilot sites, and active support for educators involved in the process of game creation, and later, in implementing these games in classes.

Later, continuing the project's vision, we used project's findings on students enrolled in a master programme called "ICT in education". Students enrolled in this master programme are, in real life teachers of different disciplines interested in introducing new technologies in learning. During a semester these students were trained to use a game editor, and working in teams they created their own educational games.

The aim of this paper is to present the process of game creation and the results obtained by this students which have become "game designers".

References

- [1] T.W. Malone & M. Lepper, Intrinsic Motivation and Instructional Effectiveness in Computer-Based Education. In Snow & Farr (Eds.), Aptitude learning and instruction. (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated Publishers, 1987)
- [2] Researches conducted during ProActive: Fostering Teachers' Creativity through Game-Based Learning, is a European project (Lifelong Learning Programme KA3), Project number: 505469-LLP-1-2009-1-ES-KA3-KA3MP
- [3] M. Prensky, Digital game based learning, New York, NY: Free Press, 2003
- [4] W. Hurton Designing Web-based training (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000)
- [5] M. Logofatu, Computer aided instruction (Ministry of Education and Research, Project for Rural Education 2008)
- [7] www.proactive-project.eu