

Volume 1, March 2010

## CreaCIT Newsletter 1

CreaCIT – Creative Cross Innovation Tutor for product development is an education development project for the EU Lifelong Learning, transversal programme KA3 (Information and Communications Technologies).

The CreaCIT project aims to **design, build and test a creative and cross disciplinary e-learning environment for product development**. In the learning environment the students are guided towards creative and lateral thinking to foster **commercial innovation and the use of user-centred design in new concepts and products**. The products can be material or immaterial, e.g. services. The learning environment is interactive and multilingual (English, French and Spanish).

The **main target groups** of the project are secondary and tertiary educational levels, students and their teachers. Product development is common between the two education levels and across educational sectors. The level of abstraction of the tasks respects the curricula requirements of each educational level. CreaCIT enables students to discover the possibilities of creative thinking and innovation.

The learning environment uses a narrative and constructive approach; the learning environment is a story, and each task is a story. Creativity is embedded in pedagogy and tasks using real world problem solving and product development processes. The reusable learning content provides rich learning material for numerous learning situations.

In addition to the learning environment (LE), the project will provide creativity guides for teachers. The creativity guides assist teachers in lesson planning and illustrating how the LE can integrate with wider pedagogical aims.

The CreaCIT project takes existing best practice in creativity and innovation from the previous EU e-CIT project and combines it with latest research in interactive multilingual online avatars from the EU FP6-IP Salero.

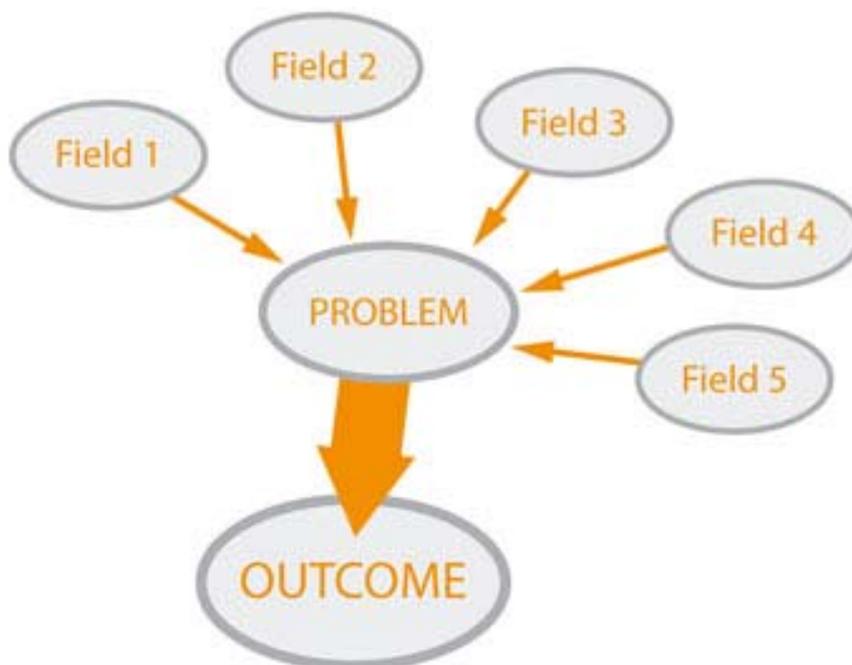
The project started on 1st November 2009 and will end on 31st October 2011.

One aim of the project is to develop teaching material and methods which would incorporate creativity into teaching and learning, not as something special and almost forced, but as a natural part of pedagogy and curricula. Indeed one final result of the project will be to establish a network of educational institutions using creative methods in teaching.

## Product and product development

A product in the CreaCIT learning environment can be tangible (e.g. a forestry machine, chair, headphones, etc.), or intangible like a service, a process, or an idea. The tasks are not tied to a certain discipline or context. Instead the situations offer multiple interpretations and possible problems to solve. These problems can be approached from various points of view, disciplines, cultures and educational levels. The variety of perspectives provides richness to the problem-solving process and can lead towards more creative and innovative solutions. The students also learn from each other at the same time.

For example, a team of six students is guided to observe processes at an old people's home. The students are studying nursing (VET), construction (VET), computing (VET), domestic and consumer services (VET), psychology (university) and design (industrial and service design). Each member of the team pays attention to different things and possible problems. The students discuss their findings within the team and decide which problem to focus on and to solve together, i.e. to develop a product. Some of the students may have a wider approach while others have a more concentrated and detailed approach. At the same time the two groups of students, the secondary and the tertiary; provide the reports or other outcomes required in their studies and level. The learning process does not only focus on the end solutions and learning about the product development process, it also involves learning from and understanding other fields, cultures and educational levels.

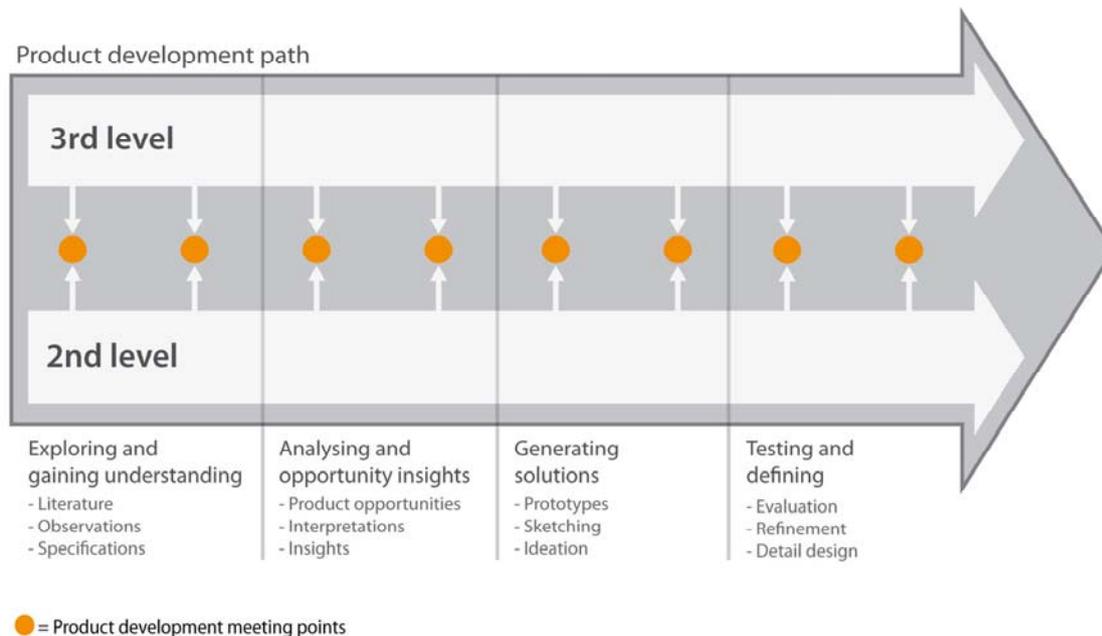


PICTURE 1: TEAMWORK IN CREACIT

The picture 1 above describes what happens on level C of the CreaCIT learning environment. This is the most demanding learning level. On level C the students have to find, define and evaluate the problem, and to solve it.

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Collaboration between secondary and tertiary level students in the CreaCIT learning environment is based on real-world product development, i.e. what happens in actual working life. Part of the work can be done separately, but the process is still team work: the members meet at different stages of the product development process. This also creates a natural opportunity for collaboration between the two educational levels with a clear purpose.

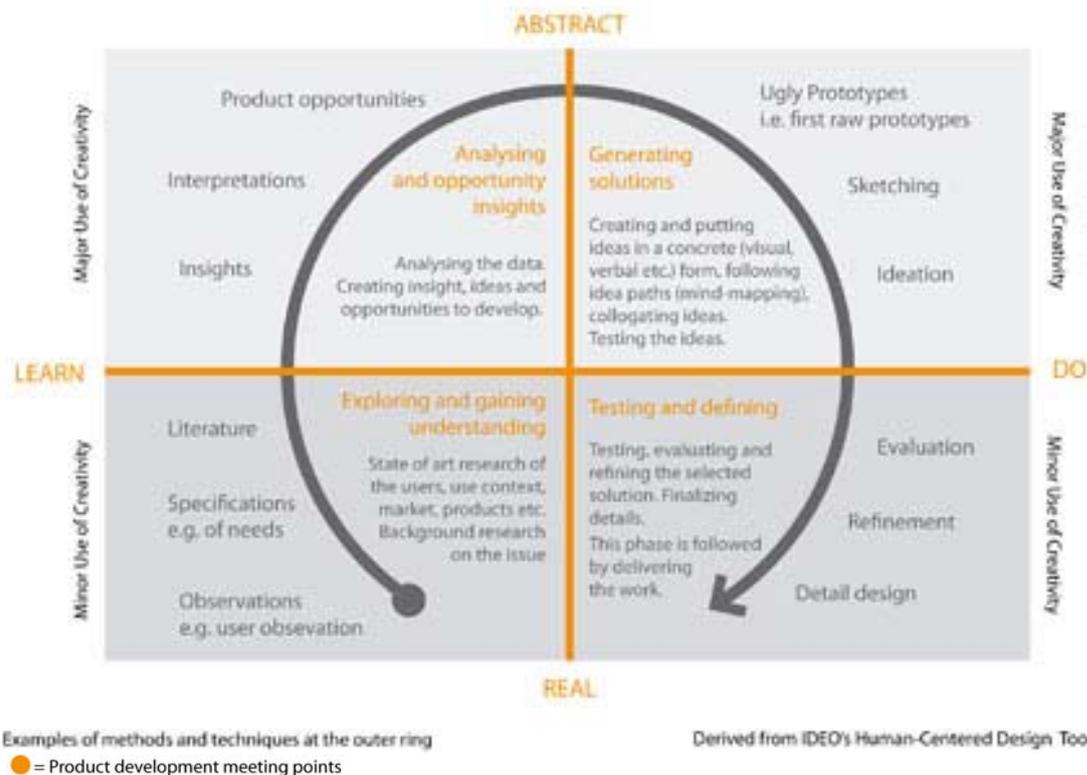


PICTURE 2: POSSIBLE MEETING POINTS DURING THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The main methods used in the learning environment are creativity (towards innovation), problem solving – design thinking, and product development. Some phases of the product development process are more creative by nature, while others focus more on refinement and the quality of the outcome. The image on the next page shows the phases of the product development process, and the level of abstraction and action during the phases. It is based on the IDEO's view of the product development process.

Because the students need to learn about creative product development, the CreaCIT tasks cover the whole range of the product development process. This happens on each level of the learning environment, on level A, level B and level C.

Each task and each learning level of the CreaCIT learning environment will have a clear pedagogic aim, and these will be linked to the EU lifelong learning key competences and the Bologna process.



PICTURE 3: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

## What's next?

The CreaCIT project started in November 2009. The development process of this narrative learning environment and its tasks continues.

The next steps will be evaluate the learning environment (content and usability), the pedagogy and the tasks with experts and to run two trials with the target groups, students and teachers from the secondary and tertiary educational institutes. The results from both will be used in the development process. The final development of the learning environment will take place in 2011. But in the meanwhile we will keep you updated with more news of the testing and the evaluation in our next CreaCIT newsletters!

## More information:

[www.muova.fi/CreaCIT](http://www.muova.fi/CreaCIT)

From the coordinator [tanja.oraviita@aalto.fi](mailto:tanja.oraviita@aalto.fi), and from the partners.

## Partner group

1. Western Finland Design Centre MUOVA (Aalto University School of Art and Design – University of Vaasa); [www.muova.fi](http://www.muova.fi); coordinator
2. The Dublin Institute of Technology DIT, Digital Media Centre DMC; [www.dmc.dit.ie](http://www.dmc.dit.ie)
3. Estonian Academy of Arts EAA; [www.artun.ee](http://www.artun.ee)
4. Seinäjoki Vocational Education Centre SEDU; [www.sedu.fi](http://www.sedu.fi)
5. University of Vaasa UWASA, Department of Production; [www.uwasa.fi](http://www.uwasa.fi)
6. Flemish Ministry of Education and Training DBO; [www.ond.vlaanderen.be](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be)
7. Ciudad Industrial del Valle del Nalón S.A.U., VALNALÓN; [www.valnaloneduca.com](http://www.valnaloneduca.com)
8. Tehniški šolski center Nova Gorica TSC; [www.tsc.si](http://www.tsc.si)

### The associated partners

- COTEC (Fundacion Cotec of Spain); [www.cotec.es](http://www.cotec.es)
- I3G - Graphic Expression in Engineering Research Group - University of Oviedo; <http://www.uniovi.es/>
- IES Cuenca del Nalón - secondary non-VET educational institute
- SEMA Société d'Encouragement aux Métiers d'Art; <http://www.metiersdart-artisanat.com/>