LEARNING TO LEARN TOGETHER: 
A VISUAL LANGUAGE FOR SOCIAL ORCHESTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Launched in July 2010, by the end of its 3-year duration the Metafora R&D project will result in the creation of a Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) system to enable 12 to 16-years-old students to learn science and mathematics in an effective and enjoyable way.

The students will, first and foremost, learn to learn together, collaboratively addressing a series of assignments – the "challenge" – posed by the teacher involving a relatively complex problem. Working in groups of 3 to 6 students during a period of 2 to 3 weeks, the students will plan, organize and tackle the challenge by themselves.

The Metafora "platform" will offer an argumentation space where the students will gather and discuss their findings and emerge with an agreed solution, using in the process also other means and tools put at their disposal by the platform – like microworlds and other "domain tools" suitable for the tasks being addressed.

The use of a special visual language will enable the students to collaboratively design their plans and reflect on the planning process and content, while allowing the system to intelligently follow-up their activities to produce useful information for them and for their teachers about the learning and solution processes.