Participant satisfaction in CARNet's online courses

CARNet's education center Edupoint develops and maintains educational programs on ICT subjects and promotes ICT application in Croatian higher education. In 2004 Edupoint developed three online courses:

- Searching of online databases

- Development of online courses with WebCT

- Development of web pages with FrontPage.

Edupoint had never made online courses before, so the project team made complete course design (from pegagogy until graphic design) from the scratch. All three courses have been designed in the same fashion.

Course elements have been designed according to «measured» students' needs. Pedagogical, didactical, methodical and communicational features initially came from the Research of CARNet's users that Edupoint had ordered from Institute for Social Sciences. The research had been conducted on approx. 1300 potential users, which roughly make 1% of total number of potential users.

Edupoint's courses:

- Last a month

- Are highly tutored (approx. 50 tutor's work hours/15 students)

- Are flexible in starting and final dates, as well as deadlines for assignments

- Are problem – based and application – based

- Have precisely defined goals

- Are orientated to practise and application

- Are specially communicationally designed

- Participants are divided into different groups based on educational level and age

- Are designed for individual work

- Offer various communication tools.

Picture 1 shows the structure of online course Development of web pages with FrontPage. Considering all three courses have been designed in the same fashion, it can easily be applied to other courses.
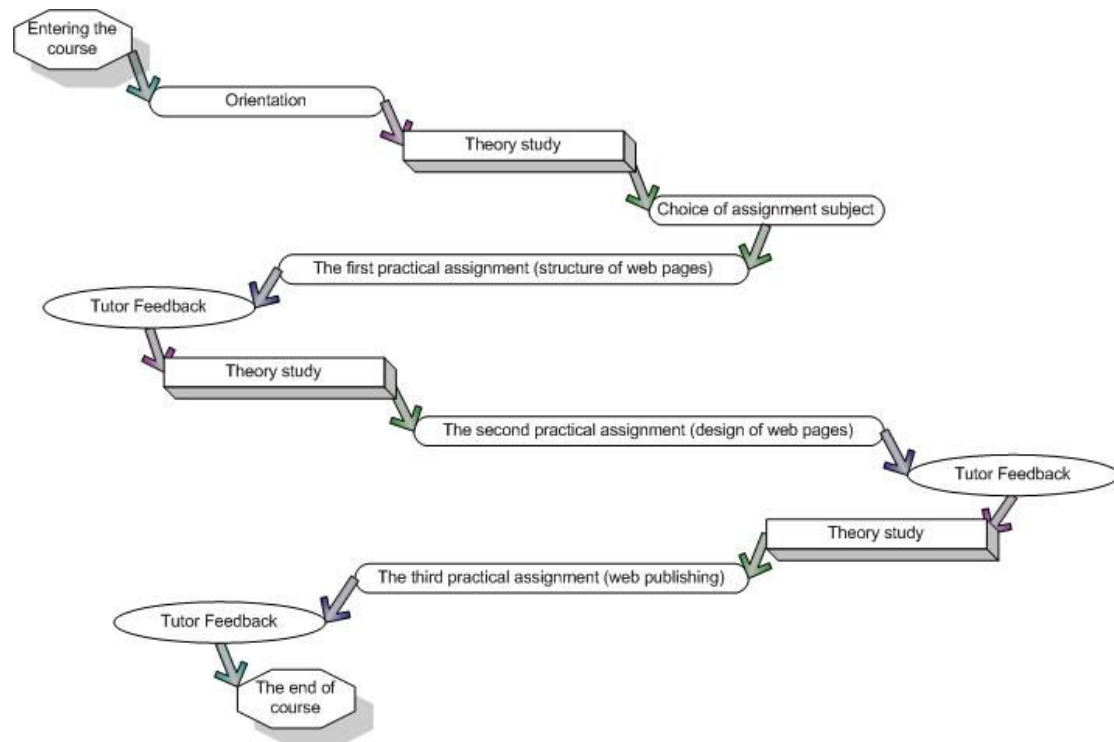
The first course generation started in January 2005. For organizational issues, course enrollment is organized once per month. Until the summer break, Edupoint conducted six course generations with approximately 350 participants.

In order to satisfy participants' needs, Edupoint team decided to make a questionnaire on participant satisfaction. The questionnaire has been designed in cooperation with psychologist Mirjana Tonković. It contains two different versions:

- Questionnaire for participants who sucessfully completed the course
- Questionnaire for participants who have not completed the course.

Participants who sucessfully completed the course mostly fill the questionnaire at the end of the course, while participants who have not completed the course receive it through e-mail.

This study will analyse results of questionnaires on participant satisfaction and connect them to other parameters of participant success (primarily number of points achieved through the course and drop out rate).

The results of this study are going to be used in improving Edupoint's courses and adopting them to participants' needs.