

Design Elements of an E-learning Course on Competence in Online Communication



Faculty of Organization and Informatics, Varaždin

Importance of online communication

◆ Growth of the Internet population and pervasiveness of online communication:



- More than 900 million users in 2005
- In the US about 90% use e-mail, 40% use instant messaging, 20% use chat/forum
- Expansion of education over the Internet/web
- Intensive use in organizational communication
- Personal and organizational web pages

Functions of online communication



Interpersonal, organizational and educational online communication



- Connecting people in workplaces and educational institutions
- Supplement for other communication channels
- Support for diverse interpersonal and group interactions and activities
- Development of online relationships

Competence in online communication

◆ What can be improved in online communication?



- Personal use of the Internet/web
- Interaction with other users of the Internet
- Online relationship development
- Presentation of oneself, product/service and institution
- Learning/teaching over the internet
- Secure and private use of the internet

Chapters/topics of the online course

◆ Topics of the e-learning course in online communication:



- **SELF** - individual use of the internet
- **INTERACT** – online communication with others
- **RELATE** – skills for development of online relationships
- **PRESENT** – presentation of oneself, product, organization
- **LEARN** – finding, using and presenting educational info.
- **PROTECT** - topics related to internet security and privacy

Subchapters/subtopics of the e-course

◆ "SELF", "INTERACT" and "RELATE" sections of the e-course:



- **SELF** - computer literacy, cyberphobia, motivation for internet use, internet addiction, online disinhibition
- **INTERACT** – online communication skills, channels, messages, contexts, netiquette
- **RELATE** – initiation of interaction, online conversation, attentiveness, self-disclosure, bonding

Instructional design of the e-course /1

◆ Course elements for motivating learners and facilitation of learning activity (in every subchapter/subtopic):



- Brief quiz and test for self-evaluation
- Self-assessment of a specific skill/trait
- Interesting content with illustrations
- Exercises and resources on the web

Instructional design of the e-course /2

◆ Recommended sequence of learning activities for each subchapter:

- Brief quiz for self-evaluation
- Self-assessment of a specific skill/trait
- Reading of theoretical content
- Exercises
- Resources on the web
- Brief test for final self-evaluation



Instructional design of the e-course /3

- ◆ Adaptation to specific characteristics of large audiences and diverse types of learners/users:
 - Self-paced and non-moderated e-course
 - Direct access to any type of content/activity (no restrictions)
 - Esthetic and ergonomic design
 - Adaptation to low-bandwidth (modem) connection to the Internet
 - No monitoring of activities of users



Statistics regarding e-course elements

- ◆ There are 6 completed chapters/topics with 32 subchapters/subtopics and a total of...



- 201 web pages with text, 280 photos
- 32 quizzes and 32 tests
- 24 self-assessment questionnaires
- 96 instructions for individual exercises
- > 100 links to resources on the web

Ergonomic design of the e-course

Reduced hierarchical organization and one basic plane within the user interface



Subchapter
S

Chapters

Activities

Link



Potential users of the e-course

◆ University students

- *Use of the e-learning course in a blended learning educational environment*

◆ Corporate/government employees

- *On-line self-paced and non-moderated course for life-long learning and corporate training (mass instruction)*

◆ Individual Internet users

- *Individual users that access the course after payment by a major credit card*

Use of the e-course by students

◆ A blended learning environment of a
"Psychology of the Internet" university course

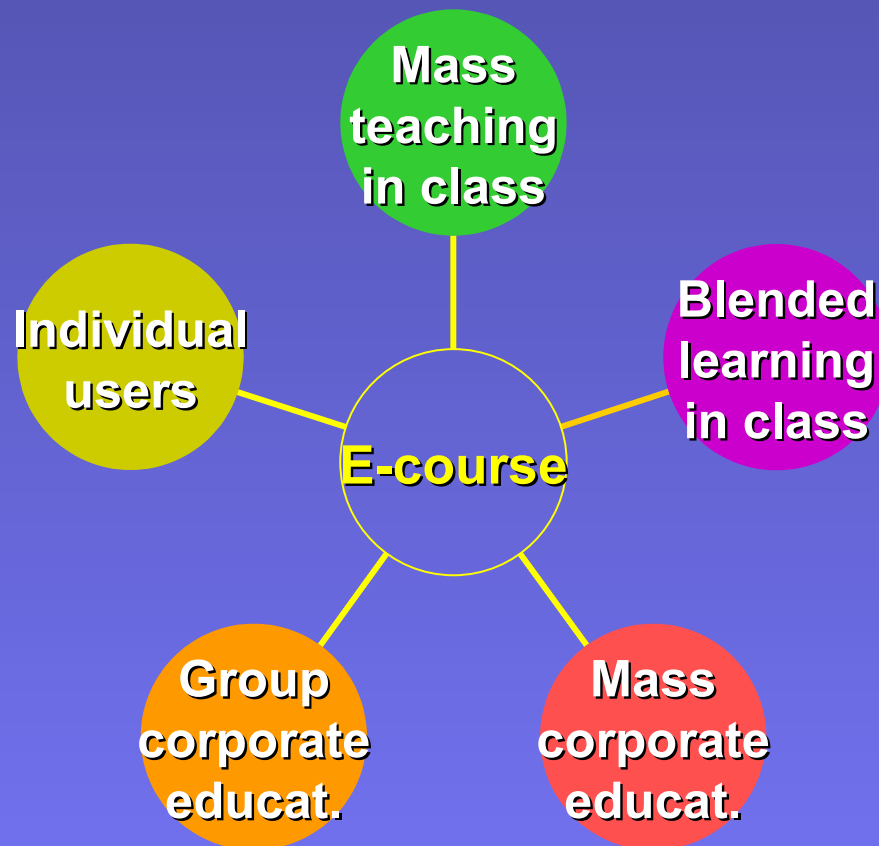




Non-academic use of the e-course

- ◆ **Corporate/government employees**
 - Mass education with a non-moderated course
- ◆ **Blended learning workshops/seminars**
 - Use of self-assessment instruments
- ◆ **Face-to-face workshops/seminars**
 - Online phase is preceding or following face-to-face education

Optimization for diverse uses



Software modules

◆ Three basic software modules were developed:

- A very simplified *Learning Content Management System (LCMS)*
- Application for generating web-based quizzes, tests and questionnaires
- Application for online payment by a major credit card



The aims of the project

◆ Several potential uses



- Assist the advancement of knowledge and skills in online communication of students, employees and internet users in general
- Enable experts in the social sciences to deliver their knowledge to large and diverse internet audiences
- Application for nonprofit projects in health communication, environmental protection and the like



Final remarks

◆ Support

- Technological project TP-02/0016-21 that is funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport

◆ Authors

- The authors are members of the CARNet Reference Center for Teaching Methods and Communication in E-education