Author's response to reviews

Title: Introducing an online community into a clinical education setting: a pilot study of student and staff engagement and outcomes using blended learning

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Author's response to reviews:

Colleagues:
Below is listed each suggestion followed by a > indicating our response.
Regards, Kathleen & Jacinta

Editorial requirements:

Document, within the methods section of your manuscript, the name of the ethics committee which approved your study.
>done

We recommend that you copyedit the paper to improve the style of written English.
>done

Please also ensure that your revised manuscript conforms to the journal style
>done

Review 1:

Discretionary Revisions

Page 11 para 1 table 1 – I find this table a little unclear and takes some time to decipher- I wonder if there is another way of presenting this table
>table revised

Could try to trim down some of the discussion points
>done

Minor Essential Revisions

P 3, P9, P23 various locations –don’t need page numbers in references
>all references checked and page numbers removed
Is the question posed by the authors well defined? The question is not stated clearly in this manuscript.

> abstract, introduction and conclusion reworded to clarify

Are the methods appropriate and well described? The methods are likely appropriate, but they are not well described in the methods section. The “design based research methodology” used was not described, and although it is referenced it would be helpful to have had a brief description for those who are not familiar with that method. Also, the statistical methods used to analyse student outcomes was not included in the Methods section but comes up for the first time in the Results section. Overall, the Methods section does not describe, in a linear fashion, the way that the study was conducted from beginning to end.

> additional detail of research methodology provided

> sections of paper rearranged and methods section revised to be step-by-step description

Are the data sound? Some of the data are sound, but much of it is very limited and not reported in a clear way. The students’ marks on the workshops are clear, but all of the opinions of students and staff using the community have such small numbers of responses that it is hard to know what they mean.

> value of small scale pilot study supported with added examples from the literature and limitations acknowledged

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? The data is mostly presented in a text format and is limited in quantity.

> no action taken; data is reported in 3 figures, 3 tables and text

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The discussion is a bit rambling, and includes some methods that belong in the methods section. The majority of the conclusions point to issues involved in creating such an online community and getting people to use it, and those are valid and supported by the data presented.

> discussion edited for expression and shortened; methods removed to revised methods section

6. Are the limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes.

> no action

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge and work upon which they are building? Yes.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? The title is fine; the abstract is not very well written and is not really clear.

> abstract revised

9. Is the writing acceptable? No, it is not. The manuscript is poorly organized and the information is not presented clearly.

> manuscript edited and parts reorganised

Major compulsory revisions:

Please state the exact purpose of the study clearly at the end of the background section.

> done

Please review the methods and results section to make sure that you outline exactly what you did and in what order when you performed this study (Methods) and then only report the results of each step, in the same order as they are described, in the Results section.

> done