Reviewer's report

Title: Communication and Proximity Affects Attributable to Sense of Presence in Distance Bioinformatics Education

Version: 2 Date: 25 November 2010

Reviewer: Andrew J Holland

Reviewer's report:

Whilst the authors have made significant changes to the manuscript, interpretation of their thinking behind these changes would have been assisted by a detailed covering letter. I believe that further changes and a comprehensive subset analysis would further enhance the manuscript.

Major

1. The introduction should be abbreviated.

2. The authors should consider the potential impact of varying levels of student experience with different forms of distant learning and how this might impact on the validity of their findings. Thus a first year student might have a very different level of comfort with and understanding of VC, for example, compared to a fourth year student. By aggregating that data for students across all four years, the authors may have stymied themselves from finding a statistically significant difference between the four methods of distant learning. Whilst individual group numbers may be low, the authors should consider analysing data based on more junior students (say first and second), versus more senior (third and fourth).

Minor

1. Many of the references contain issue numbers which should not be included.

2. Reference 23 should have the number "18" deleted after the number 23.

Discretionary

None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.