Reviewer's report

Title: Do individual learning styles influence the choice to use a web-based ECG learning programme in a blended learning setting?

Version: 3 Date: 13 September 2011

Reviewer: Margit Pohl

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes a study about the influence of learning style on usage of an e-learning system. The issue is quite controversial, as the authors explain in great detail. Learning style as such has been discussed extensively in the literature, and it is still an open question whether the concept as such makes sense. Therefore, it is certainly relevant and interesting to investigate this issue. The authors are knowledgable about the literature. The study they describe seems to be sound, and their statistical analysis is well done.

Given the controversial discussion, I found the results not very surprising, therefore, the study is not a major contribution to the field. Results from the literature would indicate that students' usage of e-learning systems is rather influenced by their attitude to e-learning. In the discussion, the authors indicate this. I was also a little bit disappointed that the authors do not report whether usage of the e-learning systems was influenced by computer/internet usage or ranking of pedagogic value of electronic teaching media (asked in a questionnaire). I would find this a valuable addition to the paper.

In their conclusion, the authors write:

Among medical students, neither learning styles according to ILS, nor a number of other studied characteristics seem to influence the choice to use a web-based ECG programme. This finding was consistent also when usage of the different modules in the programme were analysed. Thus, web-based learning programmes can attract a broad variety of medical students.

I would strongly suggest that the authors reformulate the last sentence. The hypotheses that there are no differences between groups can never be proven. You might say that you did not find any differences and that this suggests that web-based learning may attract a broad variety of students, but as it is I think the argument is too strong.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests