Reviewer’s report

**Title:** A model of the pre-assessment learning effects of assessment is operational in an undergraduate clinical context

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 22 November 2011

**Reviewer:** Larry Gruppen

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a greatly improved revision of the original manuscript. It is much more readable and the organization is also improved. A number of linkages and side-points have been removed, which has cleared up the line of argument a great deal. By and large, the authors have addressed most of my previous concerns. However, I am still unconvinced by the validity argument, still finding it a bit over-reaching for the nature of the data (NOT independent of that which gave rise to the framework initially) and its qualitative nature, which does not give clear evidence of the strength of a relationship, only that it exists in one or more interviews.

I am also still puzzled by the authors' retention of what seems to me to be the contradictory claims about 'generalizability.' On page 18 of the manuscript, they argue that more work needs to be done on generalizability (implying that the present work is only preliminary), yet on page 21 they claim that their intent is not to provide generalizable results. Similarly, back on p. 18, they say they make no claim for validity in other settings but then immediately argue for ecological validity. Perhaps I'm missing something from the qualitative research paradigm, but these seem like conflicting claims to me and certainly cause me confusion.

I guess at this point, I would describe the above comments as "discretionary" for the purposes of an acceptance decision

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests