Reviewer's report

Title: A novel collaborative e-learning platform for medical students - ALERT STUDENT

Version: 2
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Reviewer: Sunčana Kukolja

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript entitled "A novel collaborative e-learning platform for medical students - ALERT STUDENT" describes the characteristics of a new web-platform for studying medicine and presents results of the system usability and feature usefulness assessed by a group of 48 medical students.

The platform (http://student.alert-online.com/) impressed me: it brings a new combination of tools that have potential to organize content in order to optimize learning by enabling students to focus more effectively on a particular medical problem they are studying. The idea of the system is to chunk medical knowledge into small fragments (learning objects) that can be combined into higher order clusters to achieve meaningful learning. The platform enables individualization of learning (highlighting text, taking notes, tracking study time and prioritizing content according to perception of knowledge) as well as collaboration in closed networked groups with a defined set of peers and content for a given learning goal. Thus, the platform has a potential to create a tailored learning environment that is likely to promote meaningful learning with prolonged knowledge retention.

The application is freely available and is intuitive and easy to use.

Regarding the manuscript, it can be improved by attention to the following.

General Minor Essential Revisions
1) The description of the implementation of the software could be more concise.
2) The authors use to many abbreviations. The manuscript will be easier to read if you avoid unusual abbreviations (e.g. TS, PK).

Specific Minor Essential Revisions
1) Page 5: “The smallest learning block was named Flashcard, and was composed of knowledge on one side and open ended questions on the other”. The term “information” would be more appropriate than “knowledge” (brain/mind/constructs knowledge based on available information).
2) Page 6. The difference between the 2 classroom sessions (S1 i S2) is not clear. Therefore I didn’t understand the meaning of p in Table 4.
3) Table 5 is not mentioned in the manuscript.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests