Reviewer's report

Title: Use of a Virtual World Computer Environment for International Distance Education: Lessons from a Pilot Project using Second Life

Version: 2
Date: 18 December 2013
Reviewer: Sharla King

Reviewer's report:

I enjoyed reviewing the manuscript 'Use of Virtual World Computer Environment for International Distance Education: Lessons from a pilot project using second life'. However, I do have a few comments/questions that I will outline below.

Major Compulsory Revisions
- I think the literature review could be strengthened by a more extensive look at the existing literature. I feel several publications are missing that could strengthen the background.
- I noticed two purposes that are slightly different. One exploring the potential of VWs and the other investigating the feasibility. This was not a feasibility study. Please revise the Introduction to clarify the actual purpose.
- I felt the rationale for using VW (alternative medium for distance healthcare education in developing countries) was not followed up in the discussion. If bandwidth is an issue with SL, then how will this be addressed in a developing country? Is this an issue or concern? I think the Discussion / Conclusion sections would be strengthened by connecting more clearly to the purpose.
- one aspect of developing the VW that I did not see addressed was the cost and necessary expertise to develop a 'good' VW. Having been involved in this work myself, I know it can be a costly undertaking. Mentioning the sustainability of this model or approach would be helpful.

Discretionary Revisions
- the manuscript may benefit from a limitations section. For example, the 11 participants self-selected into the VW group. This may have introduced a level of bias that influenced your results.
- on page 5, you mention an article that states 'that learning space design impacts learners' processing information' and then go on to say that 'these principles'. What principles exactly? It would be helpful to see the exact principles and how you integrated them into the development of your space.
- having some idea as to the background of the VW active participants (such as where they were from, age, gender, experience with online), would have strengthened your results and perhaps your rationale for using a VW.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
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