Reviewer's report

**Title:** Improved Student Learning Outcomes Using a Blended Learning Approach in a Graduate-Level Public Health Course

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 15 January 2014

**Reviewer:** David Evans

**Reviewer's report:**

Discretionary revisions

This is a well conducted and reported piece of research which will be of interest to all educationalists concerned with the move towards blended learning in postgraduate medical and public health education. My only methodological concern is that as a quasi-experimental non-randomised design, there was one further threat to validity the author does not mention. This is that although the blended learning semester students received the same content (other than the change of the lecture delivery to online and the concomitant increase in active learning time), one possible confounding factor is the Hawthorn effect – the teaching staff are likely to have been enthusiastic about blended learning and so may have put more energy into the active learning sessions in the blended learning semester than they did to the sessions in the traditional semester (where there was active learning just not to the same extent). Thus over time and when not being observed by the evaluation, the impact of the active learning sessions might decrease over time. It would be good to see some brief consideration of this issue in the limitations section.

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

**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