Author's response to reviews

Title: Using Cognitive Theory to Facilitate Medical Education

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editorial board of BMC Medical Education,

Thank you for your and two reviewers’ prompt reply!

To Dr. Leppink

1. A couple of central questions were added in the introduction part and in discussion.
2. The method of searching was rewritten. We try to cover the related important articles more completely, several new articles were added to the reference. As the limit of searching method, we deleted the word ‘filter’ in this section.
3. We updated the description of intrinsic cognitive load and extraneous cognitive load in a clearer way. Description of germane cognitive load were added to the section of cognitive load theory. All the related concepts were updated as well. These updates can avoid misunderstanding of the theory.
4. We noted that germane load were debated, so we made an introduction of it. In the main article, we still considered it as subtype of intrinsic cognitive load.
5. The articles and book recommended by Dr. Leppink were really helpful, not only in this article, but also in our further research.
6. Search method for problem-based learning were rewritten in a clearer way. After reading article written by Kirschner et al. (Kirschner et al. 2006), we began to reflect the defects in PBL. As our article try to make a debate on the widely use of PBL, we focused more on the disadvantage of PBL. Although there is a boom of literature on PBL, literature discuss PBL together with cognitive load theory is not that much. When use ‘Problem Based Learning’ and ‘Cognitive Load Theory’ as key words at the same time, no related result can be found in Pubmed. Their abbreviations (PBL and CLT) cannot give useful result, either. It is also the reason why we try to write down this article.

To Dr. Yue

Major compulsory revisions

1. We have added four central questions in the introduction part and re-organized the article into four main sections. These four central questions can ties these points together, and can make the whole article easier to understand. In the updated version, CLT has been mentioned and explained in all sections of the article.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Clarity throughout the paper has been improved. The whole paper was re-organized.
2. We updated the description of intrinsic cognitive load and extraneous cognitive load in a clearer way. Germane load were added as well.
3. Discussion of Clark et al. (in Schema section) is not easy for readers to understand, so this discussion has been removed.
4. The last section has been re-organized. The part conclude the sentence mentioned has
been detailed.

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