Author’s response to reviews

Title: Long-term follow up of factual knowledge after a single, randomised problem-based learning course

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PDF covering letter
To: BMC Medical Education
The Editors

Re: Ms ID 2725931901299397, Long-term follow up of factual knowledge...
Dear Editors,

your editorial handling the the Reviewers comments on our manuscript are gratefully apprieciated. Here we give a point-by-point response to each of the lines of criticism, and indicate which changes have been made in the revised manuscript.

Reviewer Dr. Kwan:
1. We agree and now explicitly admit that limited exposure to (and appropriate attitude towards) PBL is a problem of our study (P. 5, L. 11-14, P. 5, L. 19-20). On the other hand, a curriculum-wide approach (as the other extreme, suitale in this regard) is of limited value for other reasons. This point is taken up, and appropriate literature is given on P. 7, L. 16-19.
2. We discus s the problem of a hybrid approach more deeply on P. 5, L. 11-14, including a new reference. We provide a more detailed description of what has been published in our old paper (ref. 4) on P. 6, L. 3-5., in order to demonstrate that learning habits of our students were indeed changed. With respect to tutor expertise, we include a new reference (P. 5, L. 20-21) to support this justified point, but give published evidence indicating that we minimized this problem (P.5. L. 22 – P. 6, L. 2).
3. The conclusion was phrased more positively (i.e., no-harm effect). This switch in emphasis is not only justified conceptually (Reviewer´s point). It is also methodologically adequate, due to the two-sided (now mentioned on P. 4 L. 11-12) statistics we used. Examples of more positive phrasing are found on P. 2 L. 16, P. 5 L. 11-14, and P. 7, L. 11, 13-14, and 23.

Reviewer Dr. Michel:
1. This point is now clarified, see P. 2 L. 7, P. 3 L. 17, and discussed, see P. 6 L. 10-11.
2. This point is now mentioned and discussed on P. 7 L. 8-10.

We hope that these changes will positively affect the quality of the paper, and look forward towards additional comments and an editorial decision.

With best regards
Stefan Herzig

P.S.: We include a red pen copy with all changes highlighted as supplementary material.