Reviewer’s report

Title: Using a conceptual framework during learning attenuates the loss of expert-type knowledge structure.

Version: 3 Date: 24 April 2006

Reviewer: Kevin Eva

Reviewer’s report:

General

The comments made during my first review have been sufficiently addressed and (I think) the paper has been strengthened relative to the original submission.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

- I am still not convinced by the argument for dichotomizing the data into >=2 vs < 2, but I would not delay publication for this reason. Still, the argument that "enumeration would generate an ordinal scale and that the individual concepts are not independent" (p7) should probably be deleted because (a) the dichotomization also results in an ordinal scale and (b) the following argument (reflecting the results of previous work) is the better justification.
- The description of Figures 2 and 3 at the bottom of page 7 are backwards - Figure 2 is novice-type and Figure 3 expert-type
- Typos: Page 14, paragraph 2 should begin "Despite the limitations of ..." or "Despite these limitations, we believe ..."; Page 16, reference 8 - McGaghie is spelled incorrectly

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

- The Woods et al. reference on page 12 seems out of place. Woods did find that instructional technique predicted delayed performance better than present performance, but that is counter to the preceding sentence’s proposal that "evaluation of knowledge structure be used to try and explain the present" rather than predict the future. The reference could be deleted, but if anything, the discussion should focus upon why that contradiction exists.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests