Reviewer's report

Title: Analysis of role-play in medical communication training using a theatrical device the fourth wall

Version: 2 Date: 24 August 2006

Reviewer: Keith Sawyer

Reviewer's report:

Upon examining the revision and the accompanying cover letter, I recommend rejection of the submission. From the cover letter, it will be apparent to the editors that the authors chose not to address my substantive concerns.

First, I said that the article was trying to do two incompatible things, each of which might be of interest to a different audience: medical educators, or interaction analysts. Instead of addressing my substantive concerns about the content of the article, the authors have taken the simple step of adding a few sentences making more explicit who they think the audience is. But that doesn't address the substantive concern expressed in my first review regarding the argument and data that are the core of the article itself.

Second, of the two potentially interesting articles that might be generated from this material, one of them I suggested would be of interest primarily to interaction analysts but not medical educators. That would be to focus on the discussion of the three "fourth walls"; but to carry through on that exploration would require a great deal of additional empirical material, as I suggested in my first review. This could be a very interesting analysis but in this manuscript, it is a very preliminary indication of what potential there is in the data. The second potentially interesting article, and the one I thought would be appropriate for this journal, has apparently already been published by these authors elsewhere.

What next?: Reject because too small an advance to publish

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.