Reviewer’s report

Title: Differences in outcomes of scientific writing among researchers using standard and online instruction - A randomized controlled trial.

Version: 3 Date: 30 March 2009

Reviewer: James Wofford

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Major Compulsory Revisions

General comments – All elements of the manuscript are greatly improved. The only section that needs significant revision is the abstract. Please revise this as this may be the only part of the manuscript that a reader reads.

Abstract

--The first sentence of the abstract background could be stronger. “... of great importance” is too vague and should be more specific.

--In the abstract methods section, there should be mention of the two countries, and the types of students involved. It might also be nice to present Google Docs or other elements of the intervention. This could be mentioned in parentheses after “online writing workshop group”. Six subgroup analysis scale seems awkward for an abstract and no other context.

--It is incorrect to say post hoc analysis measured... the analysis did not measure.

--It is not enough to say which technique was used without saying which variables it was used on. Non-parametric tests were used for what reason?

--The results section should include as a first some baseline characteristics in the first sentence.

--In the abstract conclusion the only sentence is one of speculation. It does not summarize the findings in any way. The first one or two sentences of the conclusion should summarize the results of this study before moving on to speculation.

Discussion

--In the paragraph that begins “to be sure, studies favoring traditional teaching overall online methods do exist “, the authors cite a study where there were no significant differences between traditional teaching an online. While this reviewer agrees with the conclusion of the paragraph, the first sentence should be reworded.

Results

-- I still cannot view the last table. The editors may have to help with formatting

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
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’