Reviewer's report

Title: Challenging students to formulate written questions: a randomized controlled trial to assess learning effects

Version: 3 Date: 12 January 2015

Reviewer: Sylvia Vink

Reviewer's report:

1. A minor revision was requested: a declaration of ethical approval or informed consent.

The revised version contains information about the ethical approval procedure and informed consent obtained by participants. The Methods section contains clear view on how involved participants were informed and the study is discussed along a peer reviewed checklist in order to make the treatment of involved participants transparent.

Discretionary revisions:

Introduction. Line 37: ‘quantity of small group dialogue is crucial’ is not substantiated by the work of Raut et all. This study does not explore quantity of dialogue of participation of group member in the discussions.

Line 67-69: the remark about motivation suggests that motivation differences between female and male students is examined in this study or the only reason for performance differences. In the discussion, motivation is suggested as one of different explanations. A better theoretical framework for the exploration of the impact of the intervention on male and female performances would be the finding in many studies that female students largely perform better than male students.

Methods. Line 145: obtained. (period should be added).

Discussion. Line 270: 'were' should be 'where'

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

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.