Reviewer's report

Title: Student engagement with gamified audience response system interactions in large group lectures

Version: 1
Date: 9 March 2015

Reviewer: judith barbaro-brown

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? The background and the context seem clear and well-defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? The method is reasonably well-described. What information was given to the students prior to this study, I can’t seem to locate any mention of an information sheet. It is good to see that the clickers were used in anonymous mode, and that there was no association of performance with grading. There is mention that the study is ‘exempt’ – exempt from what?

It's a little concerning that students were sent the survey during a session with a tutor, during which time they were given ten minutes to complete it during the class. Yet, the report states that completion was voluntary? Given the context of the survey being received in class, and time given by the tutor to complete it, can the authors really say this is voluntary? In this situation its possible that students felt compelled to complete the survey, hence the relatively high response rate?

3. Are the data sound? It appears to be so, but I couldn’t seem to access any charts or tables, which would have helped give a better overview as I would have liked to see how many students really felt disengaged, it only seems that those responding to the very or somewhat engaging options.

How many students on average attended the live teaching sessions?
If some students didn’t attend the teaching session, were they still surveyed?

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine?
See above comments.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? This appears to be the case.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? There appear to be reasonable discussion, although there is little discussion of why some students did not find the gamification engaging – the focus is only on the results which confirm the author’s view, and in the case there is some bias in the reporting. The authors need to balance their argument by exploring the responses of the group of students who did not like the approach. I think it’s also interesting to see that use of Echo instead of lectures increased towards the end of the learning period – was there anything in the data which
would allow the authors to discuss use of the games at during different points in the learning cycle?

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? I think this could be discussed somewhat further, i.e. what are the institutional and cultural contexts and why should they be an issue? Ditto for generalizability – why do they think this?

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge and work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? This appears to be the case.

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? The title could be re-worded as it gives little indication to what the study is trying to explore, perhaps posing it as a question would be better? The abstract covers the important points, although would it be possible to add just an extra sentence to mention that ‘live’ lectures and lecture capture contexts were used? I know this is mentioned, but it’s very brief.

Discretionary revisions 1. The abstract covers the important points, although would it be possible to add just an extra sentence to mention that ‘live’ lectures and lecture capture contexts were used? I know this is mentioned, but it’s very brief.

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Minor essential revisions 1. The title could be re-worded as it gives little indication to what the study is trying to explore.

2. There is mention that the study is ‘exempt’ – exempt from what?

Major compulsory revisions 1. The authors need to balance their argument by exploring the responses of the group of students who did not like the approach.

2. Given the context of the survey being received in class, and time given by the tutor to complete it, can the authors really say this is voluntary? The authors need to make an acknowledgement of the impact this might have had on student responses.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests