Author’s response to reviews

Title: How the Study of Online Collaborative Learning Can Guide Teachers and Predict Students' Performance in A Medical Course

Authors:

Mohammed Saqr (saqr@dsv.su.se)

Uno Fors (uno@dsv.su.se)

Matti Tedre (matti@dsv.su.se)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for the positive view of our manuscript, and for the opportunity to revise and improve the manuscript. We have tried to fully address all comments from the reviewers and have done the necessary changes that we believe have significantly improved the manuscript.

Robert A. Hanneman (Reviewer 2):

The authors appear to have responded very well to all reviewer's issues. The responses to my points are very good.

Thank you very much, we appreciate the great feedback and the constructive comments we received throughout the review process which helped greatly improve the article.

Ingo Kollar (Reviewer 3): I enjoyed reading the revised version of this manuscript. I see almost all of my previous remarks well-addressed and would thus recommend to accept the manuscript after a couple of very small corrections:

Thank you very much for the encouraging comments. We are very grateful for the the thoughtful review and the immense work you have done reviewing this article. We also appreciate the constructive comments and feedback that allowed us to greatly improve the article.
1. Even though the English has improved, I still see a couple of language issues that should be fixed. I list them here:

- p. 6, l. 18: "AN online asynchronous discussion board..."
- p. 11, l. 4: "The course was A Surgery Course..."
- p. 11, l. 12: "The discussion used THE Moodle learning management system..."
- p. 11, l. 38: "data from THE Moodle LMS..."
- p. 12, l. 59: "prediction OF underachievers."
- p. 13, l. 7: "the extent OF THE students' activity..."
- p. 16, l. 35: "to represent participants' roleS..."
- p. 16, l. 48: "Third, AN information-receiving graph..." and in the following: "highlighted THE nodes' levels..."
- p. 16, l. 51: "...was plotted using THE information centrality parameter"
- p. 17, l. 8: "figure 2 shows THE instructor..."
- p. 18, l. 24: "AN information centrality graph..."
- p. 18, l. 43: delete "the" before "how the"
- p. 18, l. 46: add colon after "mid-course"
- p. 19, l. 29: "...and if AN intervention..."
- p. 21f.: You sometimes write "Eigen centrality", and sometimes "Eigenvector centrality". I would recommend to always use the latter term.
- p. 28, l. 20: Delete "it" in "What it is interesting"
- p. 28, l. 55: add apostrophe after "peers"
- p. 30, l. 4: delete "the" before "means of" and before "out-degree"; add "centrality" after "out-degree"
- p. 31, l. 9: "Our study is a step inTO a new and growing field".

Thank you for the comments, and the great effort you have taken to review the manuscript. We have corrected all these issues and double checked it twice.
2. When interpreting the first figure, I would already recommend to help the reader understand what the different colors of the nodes stand for. This only becomes clear once you introduce figure 2 or 3.

Thank you, we have amended figure 1 legend (last paragraph of page 37) with explanation of the color and what it represents similar to other figures.

3. Perhaps I missed it, but I was not quite sure what the distance between nodes/actors in the different graphs mean and how distance is computed. This should be explained somewhere, in case it has not yet been explained.

The explanation of the distance is in page 12 first paragraph under the heading “Data mining and analysis” in the description of the layout algorithm. We have also amended it with explanation to be clearer. We also believe that the references 54, 55 and 56 have detailed description of the algorithm and the technicalities of the spatial positioning of the nodes.

In general, I congratulate the authors to a very fine piece of research!

Thank you very much this so rewarding and kind of a great scholar. We are so grateful for every comment and feedback you offered.