Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 19 Jan 2017

Reviewer: John Sandars

Reviewer's report:

The topic is of potential interest to a wider audience where there is use of online collaborative learning in medical education but I have several recommendations:

1. It is important in the title and abstract to clearly state the type of social networks that are being analysed - these are online collaborative learning in a formal module

2. There is a discussion of the use of social network analysis in medical education but it is essential to discuss the type of social network - online etc

3. The use of social network analysis is within the wider use of learning analytics but this is not discussed and it is essential to relate this study to the wider literature on learning analytics and also the previous use of social network analysis for online collaborative learning

4. The social network data collection and analysis is clearly presented but I recommend some further discussion of the justification or validity of the approach that was used

5. The conclusions are appropriate but it is important that all of the figures have clear captions and labels to describe what they are presenting to the reader

6. Learning analytics and social network analysis present large amounts of data that can be interpreted but some discussion of the practical potential uses would help the reader to consider its application eg offering support etc. This discussion can be linked to the wider literature on the use of learning analytics.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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