Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 2 Date: 20 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Ingo Kollar

Reviewer's report:

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:

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".

2. When interpreting the first figure, I would already recommend to help the reader understand what the different colours of the nodes stand for. This only becomes clear once you introduce figure 2 or 3.

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.

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

**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 am able to assess the statistics
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.