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Comment on gc-2021-36

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Community comment on "Learning outcomes, learning support, and cohort cohesion on a virtual field trip: an analysis of student and staff perceptions" by Clare E. Bond et al., Geosci. Commun. Discuss., https://doi.org/10.5194/gc-2021-36-CC1, 2022

This is a great reflection on online and virtual field teaching. The manuscript is clearly written and well-structured. I applaud the authors' effort to evaluate key issues related to carrying out a geoscience virtual field trip including internet connectivity, student and staff perceptions on learning outcomes and cohort cohesion. Lessons learnt here will certainly inform future virtual field teaching. A couple of questions and comments:

1. Key demographic data on students and staff are missing including the number of participants completing the questionnaire. If these data were collected, please consider including them.

2. Ethics and consent - Please include relevant information (in accordance with GDPR) on the ethics assessments and the consent forms used for this study.

3. There are 11 learning outcomes (bullet points under question 3) in the questionnaire. Some of these outcomes are missing from Figure 2 and the discussion section. Why is that? Could you provide an explanation?

4. Statistical information - It's not clear to me if your results are statistically significant, especially when the number of participants is not reported (and the number of staff is low). Please explain what statistical tests you 've performed including the corresponding values (in the text and in your figures, if possible).

5. Can you include the questionnaire used for testing students' internet connection speeds in the supplemental information?

6. It is stated that "the answers of some participants might have been influenced by attendance in the initial week's session prior to questionnaire completion". Can you provide more information on this session and how it might have influenced participants' answers?

7. Was there a reason for the questionnaire being anonymized? This prevented the authors from matching pre- and post-assessment results for individual participants. One way to match an individual's pre- and post-assessment answers (while remaining anonymous) is to ask participants to use a code name (known only to them) on both surveys (e.g., see: https://gc.copernicus.org/articles/4/281/2021/gc-4-281-2021.html).

8. "Students were unsure as to the usefulness of a workbook in terms of “finding a quiet space to work” in advance of the course". This statement, as phrased here, was also unclear to me. Could it be that students didn't understand what they were being asked to rate? Perhaps this statement can be phrased differently?

9. Great figures, clear and effective!