

Interactive comment on “Experiences from online and classroom education in hydroinformatics” by I. Popescu et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

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The main objective of this study is to report on the authors' experiences in conducting and comparing the delivery of hydroinformatics courses (FFM and DSS in this case) via two alternative settings: in-class and online. This is an important subject as many educational institutions are moving into using online settings for teaching engineering and earth-science subjects. However, as the reader starts to go through the manuscript, it seems that the focus and main objectives laid out earlier by the authors may have been lost throughout the manuscript. The authors need to go through a major re-structuring of the manuscript keeping in mind their objectives and what they intend to deliver to the readers. Many parts of the “Introduction” section and the “Hydroinformatics education” section can be eliminated without loss of information. Information that is not relevant to the objectives of the study should not be included, even if such information

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is important in itself. Sections 3, 4 and 5 include the main contents that are relevant to the study objectives. However, even these sections need to be re-structured and organized significantly to clearly present the main differences in the structure of the two course settings. The evaluation/assessment methods followed in each setting should be clearly and concisely presented. The same needs to be done for the evaluation results. The Conclusions section should provide well-defined findings that are supported by the study, rather than very general statements. The following are more detailed comments about the manuscript.

Introduction Section: The “Introduction” section is fairly long and can be shortened without loss of relevant information. For example, detailed information about the Bologna agreement should be presented only as long as they are relevant to the study. The same applies to describing UNESCO-IHE; only relevant information should be included. The authors should limit this introduction to information that is directly related to their subject of study (online and classroom education).

Hydroinformatics education: I believe Section 2.2 on “The Master Science in hydroinformatics” is not necessary at all to this manuscript. I suggest taking it out, or at most, including a sentence or two about it with reference to the program description on the UNESCO-IHE site. Section 2.3 would flow smoothly after Section 2.1, and there is not much relevant that Section 2.2 brings to this manuscript.

Findings: Section 5, last sentence on page 1328: “Finally, both online and face to face approaches to learning are evaluated quite well by the participants to the courses.” Is this a conclusion presented by the manuscript? If it is meant as such, then I am afraid it is not actually supported by any of evaluation analysis reported in the manuscript. The only evaluation analysis reported in the manuscript deals with evaluating how the students feel about the group discussions they had during the online offering (Table 3). Evaluation of both online and face-to-face approaches, as claimed by this statement, has never been presented in the manuscript.

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Conclusions Section: The conclusions reported in this section have very little to do with the objectives of the study. As formulated at the beginning of the manuscript, the main objective of this study is to compare the delivery of hydroinformatics courses (FFM and DSS in this case) via two alternative settings: in-class and online. The items presented in the conclusions section are mostly unrelated to this objective. (I also don't think it is very relevant to use the conclusions section, or any other parts of the manuscript, to talk about the UNESCO-IHE and what the authors think about it).

Review of previous work: The manuscript lacks adequate review of previous research on online versus classroom education in water resources. There are many studies

Repetitions and redundancy: There are many examples of unnecessary repetitions in the manuscript that should be eliminated. The same information is repeated in several places in the manuscript. Many of the sections are too wordy and can be rather exhausting to the reader. The manuscript needs to be thoroughly revised to ensure conciseness and reduce redundancy.

Writing and language style: The writing style, grammar, and the language style of the manuscript need to be revised. Several of the sentences are fragmented and need major restructuring. This issue is currently severe enough to make it difficult for the reader to follow the ideas and discussions presented in the paper in a smooth way.

Other comments: Several acronyms are used in the manuscript without pre-defining them.

Interactive comment on Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., 9, 1311, 2012.