

Reviewer's report

Title: Building Capacity Without Disrupting Health Services: Public Health Education for Africa Through Distance Learning

Version: 1 **Date:** 19 February 2008

Reviewer: Richard R Heller

Reviewer's report:

1. Does it address an important or timely issue?

This is a very important and timely issue. This is well described in the introduction to the paper.

2. Is it well reasoned?

The paper is well reasoned, both in terms of the literature review, the identified need for the capacity-building described, and for the institutional aims which are being met by the educational approach. This is an innovative programme (and the type of innovation is well reasoned) and fully deserves a wider audience to appreciate it.

3. Is it relatively balanced, or does it make plain where the author's opinions might not represent the field as a whole?

The authors' opinions very clearly shine through, and where they differ from the quoted literature (for example in the need for on-line learning) this is well identified and justified.

4. Is the standard of writing acceptable?

The paper is very well written.

Minor essential revisions.

The table in the box shows completion rates, but I am not sure if the N given relates to the numerator (those completing) or the denominator (those eligible to complete). Clarification of this would be helpful.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.