

Dear Rie et al

You now have three two very different reviews of, and some editor notes on, your ms. I think that these should be sufficient to revise your ms. Your responses to reviewers appear to indicate that you will take on board their advice. Their advice will help you improve your ms considerably. Assuming that most of the improvements are made in v2 of your ms and that it has been checked again by the referees, it is likely that I will be able to recommend publication to the Executive Editors, who make the final decision.

Let me summarize the main areas that I see, based on the comments made. First a summary of the **reports**, then some detailed points.

Sci significance	Sci quality	Presentat° quality	For publication
Fair	Poor	Fair	major revisions
Good	Good	Poor	major revisions

- **Improve the figure.** Pls provide as high a resolution as you can (the higher the better), and the publisher will adjust.
- Clarity on **extinction events**.
- Mention **debriefing**. If you have developed debriefing material, then I encourage you to include this, with a facilitator guide, in the materials package in your depository.
- It might be worth mentioning the places and circumstances (maybe a small table or bulleted list?) in which you have **tested** your VR materials so far.
- Please shorten the **title** – this is the first thing that a potential reader will see. A simple hook! I suggest: *Virtual fieldwork inquiry for the exploration of extinction events* – or something along those lines. In a word, you need to include only the key concepts to keep the title short, and put the key words as close to the start as possible.
- Situate **VR** as a special form of simulation – the Alghanaim ref that I suggested seems to be good, I think; it is in med ed, and they generally do excellent work. Also add two or three more if you can find them easily.
- Situate your VR within the Kolb ELT – not much explanation needed here – just a few refs – as everyone knows about ELT.

RC3 contains some excellent points:

- You are the best person to configure and describe the relationship between your article and the supplementary material. My hunch is that you should clearly separate the two documents (article and supplement) so that they can be read more or less independently of each other, even if that means including some of the (maybe reworded) material from the article in the supplement.
- I am not sure how strict the word count is. If you need to ask, Copernicus (editorial@copernicus.org) will be able to tell you. I think that it would help the reader if you mention the issues outlined in the second paragraph.
- In regard to Tilden's principles, I wonder whether they might not be built into part of the debriefing in some way, obviously at a level suitable for high school students. Just an idea.
- In AC6, you say "there is a slight misunderstanding of the aim of how we are using VR". If I may say so, that is for you to make clear. In our writing, we cannot blame the reader for misunderstanding, unless, of course, it is wilful on the part of the reader. I suggest that you include at least some of your explanation from AC6 in your ms, so as to lift any possible ambiguity for the reader.
- The issue about the appropriacy of physical microfossils is intriguing – and important. It raises the question of the relationship between a simulation and its referent, which is an altogether different ball game. It also raises the question of making sure that students can differentiate between the simulation world and the real world. That too is an important question to be included in a debriefing protocol. In fact, it is a fairly standard question in many debriefing protocols. Personally, I see no reason why students should not experience some form of frustration (it occurs in most real-world fieldwork), as long

as it is resolved in some way (eg, cognitive explanation during the simulation and/or emotional release during the debriefing). Indeed, some pedagogical activities, including simulation/games purposefully create ambiguity and frustration in order to give participants the experience of sorting out and understanding complex, multi-dimensional phenomena. Pedagogical activities should present challenge, otherwise participants lose interest; but not too challenging, otherwise they give up.

- Finally, yes, please do find a really good copy editor who can smooth your prose. You can start by using the OWL (online writing lab) at Perdue, and then give it to a harsh colleague.
- Please consider my comments in EC1. Your reply in AC7 is, in my view, important, and pedagogically sound, although some educators may not like it much.
- Please consult the various pages in the GC website, incl <https://www.geoscience-communication.net/submission.html>. It should tell you somewhere about how to format your revised ms, to include tracked changes.
- Good luck with the revisions. After you have submitted v2 of your ms, I will ask the reviewers to take another look.
- I should add that it would be much appreciated by your reviewers if you were to acknowledge their help. Reviewing takes time, is unpaid and requires expertise. Even if a review was harsh, in your eyes, it may well be that it provided good feedback from which your article benefitted. Acknowledgement makes their work a little less thankless. You do not need to (should not) acknowledge me.