

1 **Usability of Computerized Lung Auscultation – Sound Software**
2 **(CLASS) for learning pulmonary auscultation**

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25 **Abstract**

26 **Rationale:** The mastering of pulmonary auscultation requires complex acoustic
27 skills. Computer-assisted learning tools (CALTs) have potential to enhance the
28 learning of these skills; however few have been developed for this purpose and do
29 not integrate all the required features. Thus, this study aimed to assess the usability
30 of a new CALT for learning pulmonary auscultation. **Method:** Computerized Lung
31 Auscultation – Sound Software (CLASS) usability was assessed by 8 physiotherapy
32 students using computer screens recordings, think aloud reports and facial
33 expressions. Time spent in each task, frequency of messages and facial
34 expressions, number of clicks and problems reported were counted. The timelines of
35 the 3 methods used were matched/synchronized and analyzed. **Results:** The tasks
36 *exercises* and *annotation of respiratory sounds* were the ones requiring more clicks
37 (median 132, interquartile range [23-157]; 93 [53-155]; 91 [65-104], respectively) and
38 where most errors (19%; 37%; 15%, respectively) and problems (n=7; 6; 3,
39 respectively) were reported. Each participant reported a median of 6 problems, with
40 a total of 14 different problems found, mainly related with CLASS functionalities
41 (50%). *Smile* was the only facial expression presented in all tasks (n=54).
42 **Conclusion:** CLASS is the only CALT available that meets all the required features
43 for learning pulmonary auscultation. The combination of the 3 usability methods
44 identified advantages/disadvantages of CLASS and offered guidance for future
45 developments, namely in annotations and exercises. This will allow the improvement
46 of CLASS and enhance students' activities for learning pulmonary auscultation skills.
47
48 **Key Words:** Computer-assisted learning; Computerized respiratory sounds;
49 Interface usability; Lung auscultation

50 **1. Introduction**

51 Pulmonary auscultation is an essential part of the physical examination of
52 patients with respiratory conditions [2]. Although auscultation is commonly used
53 among health professionals [1], the mastering of this procedure requires complex
54 acoustic skills to distinguish between different respiratory sounds (RS) with similar
55 frequencies, intensities and timings [36,27]. Currently, health students are taught
56 these skills by repeatedly listening to recordings of typical RS [36,15] and visualizing
57 their waveforms [28]. However, these methods offer limited interaction and provide
58 students with a narrow representativeness of RS and conditions. Thus, to improve
59 health students' skills to detect/discriminate RS, it is crucial to develop innovative
60 teaching methods [20].

61 Computer-assisted learning tools (CALTs) aim to provide students with
62 complementary activities on a computer, related with the material being taught. Use
63 of CALTs have been shown to allow a more self-directed learning, having the
64 potential to improve teaching and learning skills [34]. Such tools show great potential
65 to be used in the teaching of auscultation, as they would allow students to interact
66 with a diversity of RS recorded in clinical environments, from patients with different
67 conditions and test the knowledge acquired. However, only few have been
68 developed in the area of respiratory medicine [36]. *CompuLung* [20,19] and *R.A.L.E.*
69 [35] are two of the CALTs available, however they are not open source, the first does
70 not allow students to record RS or test their acquired knowledge (e.g., via RS
71 exercises that incorporate solutions created by a panel of RS experts), and the
72 second is only available for *Windows* operative system. Hou et al. [13] have also
73 developed a CALT, aiming to assist nursing education on auscultation, however it
74 does not include a practical component (i.e., it does not allow knowledge testing via

75 exercises/tests resolution). *LungSounds@UA* [25], *RSAS@UA* [8] and *MARS*
76 *Database* [10] are other available tools but neither of those include simultaneous
77 recording and analysis of RS, nor exercises to test knowledge acquisition.
78 *LungSounds@UA* [25] only allows to record and store RS, whilst with *RSAS@UA* [8]
79 users can analyze but cannot record RS nor have feedback about the analyzes
80 performed. *MARS* [10] is a database of RS that allows users to listen to different RS
81 acquired in real patients, however it does not allow knowledge testing. Thus, new
82 CALTs integrating simultaneously all the required features, i.e., record, storage,
83 playback and analysis of RS, knowledge testing and tutorials about RS; are needed
84 to enhance health students' skills on pulmonary auscultation.

85 Computerized Lung Auscultation – Sound Software (CLASS) [27] was
86 developed to simultaneously record, analyze and interpret RS. CLASS had a
87 preliminary validation in which its utility and potential to be used in academic and
88 clinical environments were highlighted [27]. However, only users' personal
89 perceptions, through questionnaires and focus group, were assessed and other
90 recommended procedures for usability testing were not performed (i.e., computer
91 screen and facial expressions videos, and think aloud reports) [18,17]. Therefore,
92 this study aimed to evaluate the usability of CLASS for learning pulmonary
93 auscultation, according to the international standards for software validation [14,17].

94

95 **2. Methods**

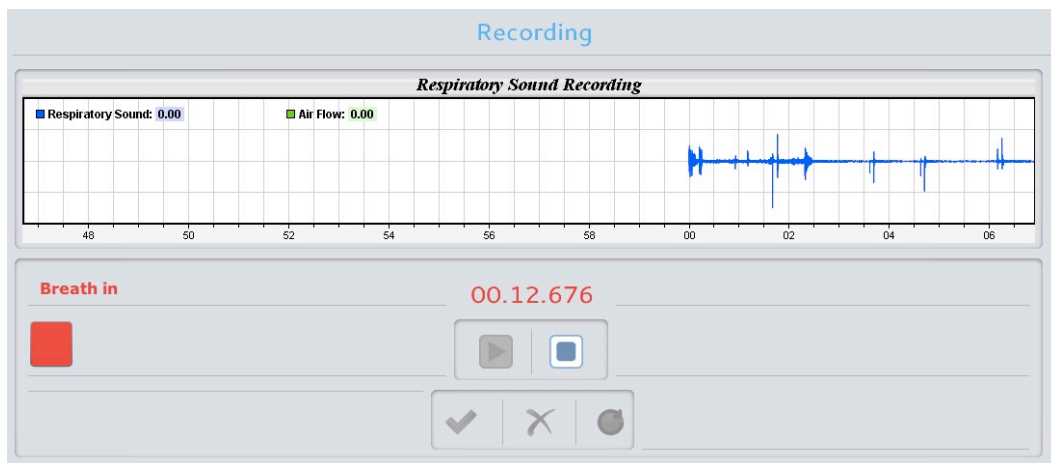
96 **2.1. CLASS description**

97 CLASS has been based on two previously developed applications:
98 *LungSounds@UA* [25] and *RSAS@UA* [8]. This CALT allows recording and

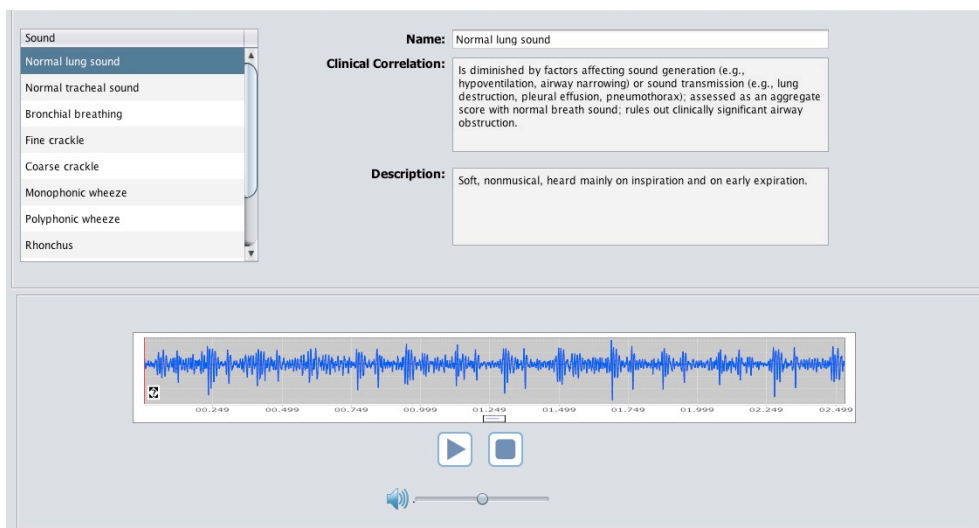
99 analyses of RS in a single application and aims to be used by health students for
100 learning purposes.

101 CLASS is organized in four tabbed document interfaces: main, recordings,
102 annotations and tutorials. It allows RS recording with a digital stethoscope or
103 microphone (Fig. 1), storage, playback of files and analyses, practice of RS
104 exercises, which have been developed and solved by a panel of RS experts (AM, CJ
105 and AO) to form RS gold standards, and further knowledge consolidation using the
106 available tutorials (Fig. 2) on RS definition, acoustic properties and clinical
107 interpretation.

108 Detailed description of CLASS can be found elsewhere [27].



109
110 **Fig. 1 – CLASS window for respiratory sounds recording.**



111
112 **Fig. 2 – CLASS tutorials.**

113 **2.2. Study design**

114 A cross sectional study was developed to test CLASS in eight individual
115 evaluation sessions conducted on the same day at the University of Aveiro.

116 Eight physiotherapy students with previous education in respiratory
117 physiotherapy were informed about the study and asked about their willingness to
118 participate. Sample size was selected based on previous studies reporting up to 80%
119 of sensitivity in detecting interface's problems using 8-10 participants [17] and on the
120 definition of usability according to the ISO 9241-11 [14].

121 Ethical approval was previously obtained from School board Ethics
122 Committee and written informed consents were collected from all participants.

123 Participants' interaction with CLASS was recorded simultaneously with three
124 different usability testing methods: computer screen videos (CSVs), think aloud (TA)
125 reports and facial expression videos (FEVs). These methods were selected as they
126 have been described as the most effective to evaluate participants' interaction with a
127 system, while performing the same tasks [17].

128 CSVs is one of the most recommended methods to test usability [7]. This
129 method consists in recording the user's computer screen while interacting with a
130 system [7], thus allowing to collect objective data of users performance, such as the
131 time spent in each task and the number of errors occurred [18].

132 TA involve the audio recording of users verbalizing their thoughts when using
133 a system, which informs on the problems found during the interaction [17]. This
134 method assesses users' thought processes or decision making when performing a
135 specific task [5].

136 FEVs consist in video-recording users' facial expressions when interacting
137 with a system [17]. This method captures participants' focus of attention, their

138 interaction with the environment and specially their emotions, as they are primarily
139 communicated through facial expressions [24].

140

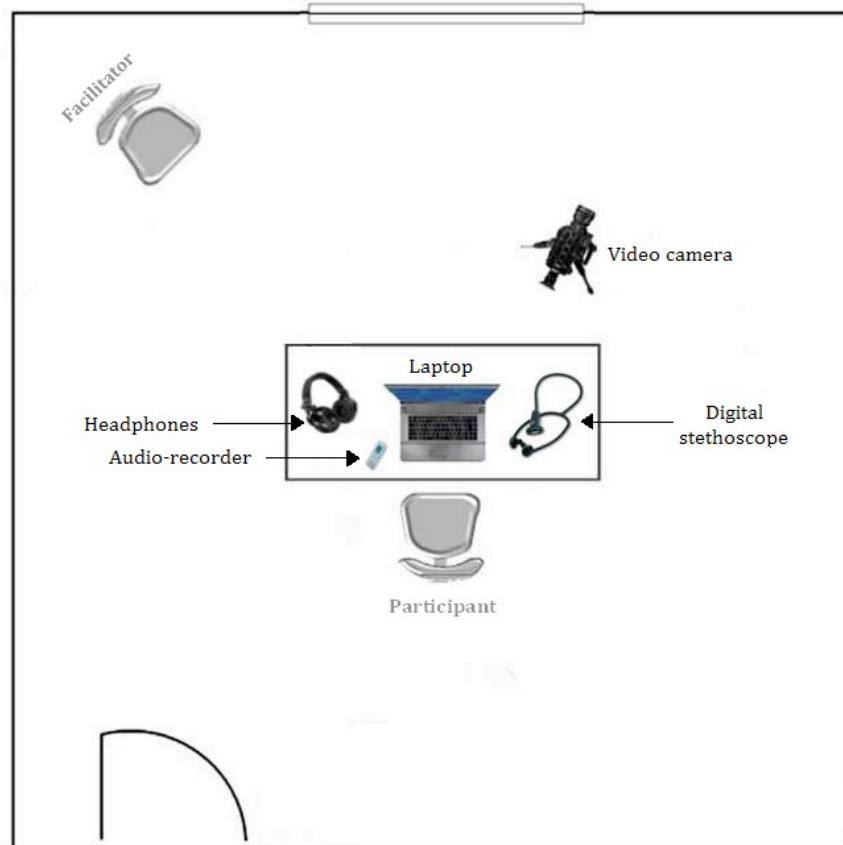
141 **2.3. Procedures**

142 Two days prior to the validation sessions, participants attended a 60 minute
143 group training session [6]. Participants received a user-manual describing the
144 general structure of CLASS and were encouraged to explore the application on a
145 computer without talking with each other. No further contact with CLASS was
146 provided to participants until the validation session.

147 The validation sessions occurred in two rooms, set up according to Kushniruk
148 and Patel [17]. Participants were seated in front of a desk with a laptop with CLASS
149 and the TipCam Screen Recording Software installed [32], an audio-recorder, a
150 digital stethoscope (WelchAllyn Meditron 5079-400), headphones and a video
151 camera pointed to their faces (Fig. 3). Two researchers involved in the development
152 of CLASS conducted the sessions, however they only intervened to clarify
153 participants' doubts. All participants received an user-manual and a case-study
154 developed according to Kushniruk et al. [18]. The case-study aimed to guide
155 participants to perform the same tasks, representative of the real use of the
156 application, i.e., *create a patient, record two RS files* (in the researcher or
157 themselves), *annotate the recorded RS* (i.e., identification of respiratory phases,
158 abnormal RS), *perform one beginner exercise and one advanced exercise* (i.e.,
159 identification of respiratory phases, abnormal RS, addition/removal of annotations,
160 comparison of annotations with the gold standard) and *consult tutorials*.

161 One researcher read the case-study aloud and participants were given
162 enough time to read it by themselves and clarify any doubts before starting the tasks.

163 Then, the researchers turned on the recorder software, video camera and audio-
164 recorder.



165

166

Fig. 3 – Room setup.

167

168 **3. Data analysis**

169 Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample. Data is presented as
170 mean (standard deviation), median [interquartile range] or number (percentage).

171

172 **3.1. Analysis of Computer Screen Videos**

173 Two researchers independently observed and analyzed the CSVs using the
174 Noldus The Observer XT 10.5 software (Noldus International Technology,
175 Wageningen, Netherlands) [21]. This software has been developed to manage and
176 analyze observational data, and its use in human-computer interaction studies has

177 previously been validated [23,38]. The time spent in each task, frequency of warning,
178 error and success messages and number of clicks per task were counted.

179

180 **3.2. Analysis of Think Aloud reports**

181 Three researchers listened and transcribed eight audio files. Then, two
182 researchers conducted a thematic analysis [33], codifying it under the following
183 themes, previously agreed in a consensus meeting:

- 184 ▪ *Report* – commentaries describing which tasks were being performed in the
185 interface.
- 186 ▪ *Doubt* – commentaries reporting doubts in understanding the case-study or
187 performing tasks.
- 188 ▪ *Problem* – commentaries reporting problems/difficulties when interacting with
189 the interface.

190 The *problems*' theme was further grouped into 3 categories:

- 191 ▪ *Layout* – commentaries about the interface design and presentation.
- 192 ▪ *Functionalities* – commentaries reporting difficulties/problems with interface
193 functions.
- 194 ▪ *Unfamiliarity* – commentaries reporting difficulties using the interface due to
195 participants' lack of familiarity using it.

196 Disagreements in data coding and grouping were solved by consensus and
197 when consensus could not be reached, a third researcher was consulted. The
198 frequency of each theme/category was analyzed.

199

200

201

202 **3.3. Analysis of the Facial Expression Videos**

203 Two researchers analyzed participants' facial expressions using the Noldus
204 software.

205 Facial expressions were studied by analyzing the frequency and duration of a
206 list of behaviors (ethogram), derived from: the literature [3,23]; preliminary
207 observations of the video recordings [22]; and the facial acting coding system [4].

208 The following categories composed the ethogram: *eye contact with the*
209 *screen; verbal communication; look away; read the case; smile; and other, such as*
210 *frown, confusion, head shake, consult the manual or hand gestures* (Table 1).

211

212 **Table 1** –Ethogram of the facial expressions.

Categories	Description
Eye contact with the screen	The user looks directly to the screen, clearly focused on reading, searching or understanding something in the interface.
Verbal communication	The user communicates using words and/or sentences, to clarify any doubt about the system or report his/her thoughts or problems found.
Look away	The user looks away from the screen, looking around for nothing in particular.
Read the case	The user looks directly to the case study, to read or understand something in it.
Smile	Facial expression where the lips slide back or move away slightly (mouth can be half opened) as indicative of agreement, comprehension and accomplishment.
Other	
Frown	The user corrugates both eyebrows as indicative of frustration/dislike for not understanding the interface or not finding what he/she is looking for.
Confusion	Facial expression where the eyes are wide open and the face shows confusion, as indicative of a mistake or misunderstanding.
Head shake	The user shakes his/her head in a negative way as indicative of disagreement.
Consult the manual	The user looks directly to the user-manual, to understand how to perform one or more tasks.
Hand gestures	The user moves with his/her hands while trying to accomplish a task, to support the thinking process.

213 After the individual analysis of the CSVs, TA reports and FEVs, two
214 researchers matched their timelines to relate the facial expressions, problems
215 reported at TA and error messages with the performed tasks.

216

217 **4. Results**

218 Eight physiotherapy students (37.5% males; age 20.5 (0.5) years) completed
219 the training and validation sessions. During the analysis, one screen recording was
220 found to be corrupted due to a technical problem and was excluded. Hence, 23 video
221 and audio files were analyzed: 7 CSVs, 8 TA reports and 8 FEVs. Each participant
222 took on average 32 (12) minutes to complete the tasks.

223

224 **4.1. Computer Screen Videos**

225 Participants spent more time in the *advanced exercise* (6.3 min [1.8–8.4 min]),
226 followed by the *annotation of the recorded RS* (5.8 min [4.5–7.3 min]) and the
227 *beginner exercise* (4.5 min [3.4–13.1 min]). The tasks with the shortest duration were
228 *create a patient* (2.4 min [0.5–3.1 min]) and *consult tutorials* (2.1 min [0.9–2.8 min])
229 (Table 2).

230 Regarding to the number of clicks needed to accomplish a task, the shortest
231 task (i.e., *consult tutorials*) was associated with fewer clicks (12 [1–29]). Similarly,
232 the most time-consuming task (*advanced exercise*) was associated with the highest
233 number of clicks (132 [23–157]).

234 Considering the messages displayed by the interface, each participant found
235 a median of 15 [12–19] messages, of which 46.6% (n=62) were *success messages*,
236 33.1% (n=44) *warning messages* and 20.3% (n=27) *error messages*. Most *error*
237 *messages* occurred at *beginner* (n=10; 37%) and *advanced exercises* (n=5; 18.5%).

238 **Table 2** – Events found in the computer screen videos.

Task	Time spent (min)	Error messages	Warning messages	Success messages	Number of clicks
Create a patient	2.4 [0.5–3.1]	4 (14.8%)	0 (0%)	5 (8.1%)	40 [6–45]
Record RS	4.2 [3.1–6.9]	3 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	20 (32.3%)	32 [25–67]
Annotate RS	5.8 [4.5–7.3]	4 (14.8%)	10 (22.7%)	8 (12.9%)	91 [65–104]
Beginner exercise	4.5 [3.4–13.1]	10 (37%)	21 (47.7%)	20 (32.3%)	93 [53–155]
Advanced exercise	6.3 [1.8–8.4]	5 (18.5%)	10 (22.7%)	9 (14.5%)	132 [23–157]
Consult tutorials	2.1 [0.9–2.8]	0 (0%)	3 (6.8%)	0 (0%)	12 [1–29]
Total	31.3 [23.3–41.7]	27 (100%)	44 (100%)	62 (100%)	394 [242–549]

239 Data is presented as median [interquartile range] or number (percentage).

240

241 4.2. Think Aloud reports

242 A total of 447 interventions were found at TA transcriptions: 283 (63.3%)
 243 *reports*, 74 (16.6%) *problems* and 67 (15.0%) *doubts*. Each participant intervened
 244 approximately 6 times [2.3–12.0] to report a problem, resulting in 14 different
 245 interface *problems* detected: 7 (50.0%) related to the interface *functionalities*, 5
 246 (35.7%) due to *unfamiliarity* with the interface and 2 (14.3%) related to the interface
 247 *layout*.

248 Regarding interface *functionalities*, 7 participants (87.5%) reported difficulties
 249 hearing/annotating the recorded RS due to noise/interference and 4 participants
 250 (50%) claimed that the sound presented in the *advanced exercise* was too low in
 251 volume to be clearly heard. Other *functionalities'* problems such as impossibility of
 252 navigating between tabbed document interfaces without losing the previous inserted
 253 information (n=1; 12.5%), interface crashing during the tasks (n=1; 12.5%),
 254 difficulties selecting and removing the respiratory events from the annotation panel
 255 (n=1; 12.5%), difficulties adding respiratory events (n=1; 12.5%) and difficulties in
 256 selecting the required patient (n=1; 12.5%) were also reported.

257 In the *unfamiliarity* with the interface category, 2 participants (25%) showed
 258 difficulties understanding the aim of the *advanced exercise* (i.e., correct the
 259 annotations already performed in a sound file) and the concept of gold standard.
 260 Other *unfamiliarity* problems such as difficulties in identifying the right patient to
 261 record the RS in the patient list (n=1; 12.5%), difficulties in identifying the different
 262 colors corresponding to each respiratory phase, crackles and wheezes annotation in
 263 the annotation panel (n=1; 12.5%) and difficulties in understanding the annotation
 264 process (n=1; 12.5%) were also reported.

265 Concerning to the interface *layout*, 2 participants (25%) referred that the
 266 application should have a timeline that follows RS reproduction, and 1 (12.5%)
 267 reported he/she missed a toolbar which allowed scrolling throughout the table
 268 presenting the respiratory events annotated.

269 After matching the problems reported in TA with the tasks participants
 270 performed, it was observed that most problems occurred at *advanced* (n=7; 46.7%)
 271 and *beginner exercises* (n=5; 33.3%). *Create a patient* and *consult tutorials* tasks did
 272 not present any problems reported. Additionally, *annotate RS* was the task were
 273 most participants found problems (n=5; 62.5%) (Table 3).

274

275 **Table 3** – Number of participants reporting a problem per task.

Problems	Tasks						Total ^a
	Create a patient	Record RS	Annotate RS	Beginner exercise	Advanced exercise	Consult tutorials	
Recorded RS	-	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	-	-	-	7 (87.5%)
RS at <i>advanced exercise</i>	-	-	-	-	4 (50%)	-	4 (50%)
Navigation between TDI	-	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	1 (12.5%)

Interface crashing	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	-	1 (12.5%)
Select/remove annotation	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)
Add annotation	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	-	1 (12.5%)
Keeps backing to other patient	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)
Understand <i>advanced exercise</i>	-	-	-	-	2 (25%)	-	2 (25%)
Choose wrong patient	-	1 (12.5%)	-	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)
Understand gold standard	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	-	2 (25%)
See respiratory phases' lines	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	-	1 (12.5%)
Difficulties annotating	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	-	1 (12.5%)
Missing timeline	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	1 (12.5%)	-	2 (25%)
Missing scroll bar	-	-	-	-	1 (12.5%)	-	1 (12.5%)
Total ^b	0 (0%)	4 (50%)	5 (62.5%)	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)

276 Data is presented as number (percentage).

277 ^a Participants reporting the same problem at more than one task were counted only once.

278 ^b Participants reporting more than one problem at the same task were counted only once.

279

280 4.3 Facial expressions

281 *Eye contact with the screen* was the behavior category with the highest
282 duration (mean duration 28 (10) min) whilst *verbal communication* was the category
283 most frequently observed (48.5 [9.5–81.8]).

284 Other categories frequently observed were *look away* from the screen (34
 285 [13–45.8]) and *read the case* (18.5 [15.5–22.5]). *Smile* was the less observed
 286 category (5 [1.25–10.5]).

287 In the *others* category, 5 participants showed *confusion* (1 [0–4.75]), 5 *shook*
 288 their *heads* (1 [0–2]), 4 *frown* their brows (0.5 [0–2]), 3 *consulted the manual* (0 [0–
 289 2.5]) and 3 presented *hand gestures* (0 [0–1]).

290 After matching the facial expressions with the tasks performed, it was
 291 observed that *smile* appeared mainly when *recording a RS* (n=10; 18.5%) and
 292 *creating a patient* (n=9; 16.7%), *confusion* was observed mostly at *advanced*
 293 *exercise* (n=6; 35.3%) and *head shake* occurred generally when *annotating a RS*
 294 (n=4; 40%) (Table 4).

295

296 **Table 4** – Facial expressions observed when the participants performed specific tasks.

Facial expressions	Tasks							Total
	Create a patient	Record RS	Annotate RS	Beginner exercise	Advanced exercise	Consult tutorials	Other	
Smile	9 (16.7%)	10 (18.5%)	3 (5.6%)	1 (1.9%)	5 (9.3%)	1 (1.9%)	25 (46.3%)	54 (100%)
Frown	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0%)	5 (55.6%)	9 (100%)
Confusion	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	6 (35.3%)	0 (0%)	5 (29.4%)	17 (100%)
Head shake	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	10 (100%)
Hand gestures	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)

297 Data is presented as number (percentage).

298

299

300

301 **5. Discussion**

302 This is the first study reporting on the combination of CSVs, FEVs and TA
303 reports to validate a CALT. Comprehensive and more objective results on the
304 validation of CLASS have been found, namely observing that the most time-
305 consuming tasks, were the ones associated with the display of more error
306 messages, higher number of clicks, problems reported and negative facial
307 expressions (e.g., *confusion* and *head shake*). Despite these drawbacks, it was also
308 found that *smile* was the only facial expression present in all tasks performed, which
309 indicates that, overall, participants were satisfied with CLASS functionalities and
310 performance, and therefore it has potential to be integrated in students' learning
311 activities.

312 The CSVs data allowed observing that error messages were the less frequent
313 type of message found, and that *beginner* and *advanced exercises* were the tasks
314 with the highest prevalence of error messages. This is a positive result towards the
315 implementation of CLASS, since it overcomes the drawbacks of similar previously
316 validated CALTs, reported as less intuitive [25], and follows the literature
317 recommendations on error rates and error prevention (i.e., low error rates and error
318 prevention, are desirable in human computer interfaces) [11,12,30]. Also, it
319 emphasizes previous results which showed that CLASS is easy to navigate and
320 perform tasks [27].

321 Nevertheless, it should be noted that *beginner* and *advanced exercises* need
322 to be further improved, as it is known that a high prevalence of errors affects task's
323 outcomes and lead to more usability problems [30]. These improvements will be
324 accomplished by: i) adding a timeline that follows RS reproduction, ii) using RS of

325 better quality, iii) simplifying the process of selecting, add and removing respiratory
326 events, iv) adding an extra simpler and easier level of exercises.

327 Although more error messages have been reported at *beginner exercise*,
328 participants needed more time to complete the *advanced* than the *beginner exercise*.
329 It has to be noted that, although exercises had different complexity levels, they were
330 similar in terms of the interface commands. Therefore, after performing the *beginner*
331 *exercise*, participants may have developed a better understanding of which steps to
332 perform in the interface to complete the *advanced exercise* (e.g., how to add/remove
333 a respiratory event and start/pause the RS file). This phenomenon has been
334 previously described by Davis et al. [6], who claimed that prior knowledge may aid in
335 learning a succeeding task, and can also be supported by the few number of
336 unfamiliarity problems found at *advanced exercise* relatively to *beginner exercise*.

337 Literature has shown that the number of clicks during a given task are
338 indicative of users' behavior [11], being the tasks which require higher number of
339 clicks associated with higher levels of effort needed to accomplish it [31]. In the study
340 of Krall and Sittig [16], participants suggested a reduction in the number of mouse
341 clicks to increase system's efficiency. This information can be directly applied to the
342 improvement of CLASS by showing that it is essential to reduce the number of
343 mouse clicks needed to fulfill *beginner* and *advanced exercises*, and *annotation of*
344 *RS* [31]. Similar to what has been found with the CSVs analysis, analysis of FEVs
345 further emphasized that *beginner/advanced exercises* and *annotation of RS* where
346 the tasks most associated with negative (e.g., *confusion*) [26] and disagreement
347 expressions (e.g., *head shake*) [9].

348 TA reports have shown potential to collect very detailed and exceptionally
349 revealing data in real-time use [5]. Although it was impossible to distinguish TA

350 reports from communication with the researcher at transcription, the association of
351 these reports with FEVs allowed this distinction for the majority of data. Combination
352 of these data was essential to distinguish between problems found by users that
353 could be solved by themselves, from problems requiring the researcher intervention.

354 Problems found at TA were mainly related with interface *functionalities*. The
355 most reported problem was difficulties hearing/annotating the recorded RS due to
356 noise/interference. Although some of the problems found were similar to the one's
357 previously reported [27], this study uncovered new important difficulties, such as the
358 low volume of the RS file presented at *advanced exercise*, the need for a toolbar that
359 allows scrolling throughout the table presenting the events annotated and the
360 misunderstanding of the gold standard. This information is essential to rethink the
361 presentation of exercises and especially of the gold standard, as this has been
362 considered a crucial feature of educational respiratory CALTs [8] and is one of the
363 major improvements of CLASS when compared with previously validated systems
364 [8].

365 The tasks *create a patient* and *consult tutorials* were the ones where *smile*
366 was mainly observed. It is known that this facial expression is usually linked to
367 happiness, agreement and accomplishment [37,23] and thus, may reflect the
368 importance that participants attribute to these tasks and the pleasure felt when
369 accomplishing them with success. Nevertheless, although being more frequent in
370 these tasks, *smile* was the only facial expression observed in all tasks which shows
371 that, although improvements are needed, the interface was overall friendly to use
372 [23,37]. These results are similar to those found by Semedo et al. [27] in the
373 questionnaires filed by participants after the validation sessions.

374 Finally, it should be noted that each participant only reported approximately 6
375 problems in their interaction with the interface, and almost half of the problems were
376 due to *unfamiliarity* with the interface or interface *layout*. Therefore, it seems that
377 with users' experience and incorporation of layout suggestions, CLASS has great
378 potential to be easily incorporated in students' academic activities.

379

380 **5.1. Limitations**

381 Some limitations need to be acknowledged. Firstly, CLASS was tested only
382 with physiotherapy students, leaving aside other health students which could
383 potentially benefit from its use. It should be noted that this was a preliminary
384 validation and according to the current guidelines these students were representative
385 of the target user population [18]. After implementing all the required improvements,
386 it is planned to test CLASS with a broader sample including other students, health
387 professionals and researchers. Secondly, the presence of external observers in the
388 testing rooms might have led to psychological, physiological and emotional changes
389 [29]. Nevertheless, the interaction with the researcher has been reduced to the
390 essential minimum and the organization of the testing room followed standardized
391 rules [17] to prevent participants' distraction and distress. Thus, it is believed that
392 researchers' influence was not significant to the results found.

393

394 **6. Conclusions and Future Work**

395 According to the authors' best knowledge, CLASS is the only available CALT
396 that simultaneously allows RS recording, analysis and evaluation of users' acquired
397 knowledge. The combination of the 3 usability methods allowed a more
398 comprehensive and objective identification of advantages/disadvantages than the

399 conventional single method commonly used and provided guidance for future
400 developments. CLASS seemed friendly to use and therefore, may be integrated in
401 students' activities for learning pulmonary auscultation skills. To enhance CLASS
402 features, improvements should focus on *exercises* and *annotation of RS*. A new
403 version of CLASS that also serves the needs of health professionals and
404 researchers is being prepared.

405

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411

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420

421 **Conflict of interest statement**

422 The authors certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial
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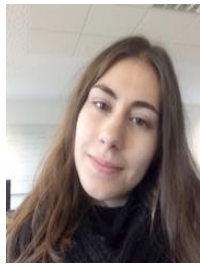
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530 **Authors' biography**

531

532



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