Reviewer's report

Title: Social Action or Critical Analysis? A concept analysis of critical health literacy

Version: 2 Date: 10 October 2012

Reviewer: Kristine Sorensen

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary revisions only:
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The question is well-defined and highly relevant for informing policy-makers professionals and academia in the field of health literacy.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods are well described and relevant. The method choice scrutinizes the data in a way that provides new insights to the concept of health literacy.

3. Are the data sound?
In the light of the recent escalating of data within the field of health literacy, and the broad search for data in the review, it sounds reasonable to my knowledge with the amount of articles included in the data set. For the qualitative study the number of participants would preferably have been 8-10 people from each group (decision-makers and professionals), however the transparency illuminated through the text showed that a considerable number of people were contacted, so the final number of people is accepted on this basis. The richness of data could be reflected upon by the authors on this note to argue that the number of participants from each group is sufficient for the purpose of the study.

All in all the data provides significant grounds for the conclusions posted in this paper.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes, I appreciate the style of relating quotes from academic literature with findings in the colloquial group. It is easy to read and understand and provides clarity in terms of perspectives underlined or discussed.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
I appreciate the fact that the authors discuss the community and societal aspects of health literacy and highlight Freire and his thinking in terms of the discursive impacts of the choice of interpretation. The authors discuss how health literacy and literacy should be distinguished – and they argue that critical health literacy should be linked to a wider audience than the health field. For further elaboration I hope the authors will add a sentence concerning the importance of other
“literacies” being important for health decisions such as financial literacy, political literacy, cultural literacy etc, some which Zarcadoolas and Pleasant also touch upon in their work. With this I stress that the link is not only to literacy itself, but also to the many other types of literacies related to the development of life skills in general – for individuals as well as for communities.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limitations of the work is not stated as such, however its sharp focus, and its relation to previous work and its contribution to the field is clearly framed.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
To my knowledge the authors reference correctly to relevant literature for this article.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
I find a fine association between the content of the article and the abstract included. However, I am not in favour of the title, I don’t think, it captures the breadth and depth of the article: Social action and critical analysis (of what?). It does not direct the reader enough; I propose to make the first part more specific building on the lines of the social actions and societal impact that the authors want to highlight.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
The writing is excellent, it is clear that it is native speakers being involved in the paper.

In my opinion the paper rely on discretionary revisions only and it can also be reported as is.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests