**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Big Fish in a Big Pond for Medical Students; a multimethod study.

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 5 April 2011

**Reviewer:** Casey White

**Reviewer's report:**

**MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS**

1. The authors do not clarify the difference between academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy. They rely heavily on Marsh because of that author's connection with BFLPE, but do not cite any other literature that is very relevant here.

2. The authors recognized this themselves -- the number of students in study 1 is too small and possibly not representative and therefore it is not possible to generalize results to entire class.

3. Because the authors could not recreate the necessary BFLPE environment, they offer readers what is a "leap" -- that a decline in academic self-concept is evidence of the existence of BFLPE.

4. The authors do not clarify the grading scheme at their school. Regardless of the fact that students are clearly seeing scores (and class means), is the final scheme pass/fail or A, B, C, D etc? This would definitely impact competitiveness but might also impact self-concept. THAT would be interesting to know. For instance, if P/F in the first two years I would recruit second year medical students and compare responses to third year medical students who are competing with each other for Honors/A grades.

5. There is also a much bigger literature on attribution theory (e.g., Deci & Ryan) that provides evidence that attribution is more complex than internal vs. external. A review of this literature by the authors might have influence how they reported their findings.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.