Reviewer's report

Title: Programmatic assessment of competency-based workplace learning: when theory meets practice

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Reviewer: Charlotte Ringsted

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Manuscript on work-place based programmatic assessment.

I want to complement the authors on a very well-written manuscript and their tremendous job on designing and evaluating their WBA assessment programme.

However, I have some concerns regarding the manuscript as it is for now.

First, the authors claim that the study is design-based research (DBA). However, some crucial elements are lacking in order for this to be DBA, i.e. there is no cyclic development, there is no theory that is tested or refined (the theory claimed is rather principles or a conceptual framework, but not a theory); and the study does not run across several settings. Hence, this study must be classified as a development study including evaluation, rather than DBA. I suggest the DBA part be left out.

Having said that, I find that despite the somewhat disappointing results, this study is of interest to the readership of medical education literature and be of help in the design of programmatic assessment according to a competence-base framework.

Other concerns include:

The authors need to describe the competence-framework better, not just refer to a reference.

The authors should consider a wider literature search regarding examples of assessment programmes. Most of this programme predominantly include the Mini-CEX - why is that? And more reference to literature on that could be included in the discussion - especially on the effect regarding learning. There are other formats of assessment programmes not mentioned, i.e.:


Moreover, there are numerous articles on ‘feedback cards’ and the poor effect and implementation.

The discussion tend to be a repetition of the results and so does the conclusion, which is very long. The latter could be more to the point.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests