Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 28 June 2013

Reviewer: Anneke Kramer

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Major Compulsory Revisions

This is a very interesting and relevant study that is well written. However, the content of the manuscript is complex and not always logical to me. It asks a lot of the reader. Also I have some questions about the research questions, the methodology and the results. In the following I will give some specific comments.

1. abstract
the wording in the abstract is not always corresponding with the main text (for example: the research questions, the last sentence of the methodology)

2. background
line 90-91: the transition to the research questions is rather abruptly.
line 91-97: these research questions are very specific and in my view not suitable in a design based model. I prefer your description In line 98-104. Why these specific questions? Are your research questions not:
how does an assessment programme according to the theory look like?
how can we evaluate the design?
what are the results of the evaluation?
how should the programme be redesigned?
line 93-94: what do you mean with this question? It is hard for me to truly understand this.
In line 173-175 you describe the four core elements of the programme: are these the same as the four topics of your research questions? If so, I would prefer more corresponding wording.

3. goal and elements of the programme
line 132-138: are these goals not the input for the evaluation of the design of the programme?
line 144-45: piloted students: are they the participants? , see also line 185: you do not explicitly mention this.

4. methods
169: regular questionnaire: what do you mean by regular/? also used in the old
programme? how can they meet then the topics of the new programme and the
four topics you mention later on?

170-71: 'these quantitative data...interviews'. Are the questionnaires only used for
this purpose? Later on you describe a quantitave analysis and you use the
results to answer a research question>so I would like a more clear description in
the procedure about the use of the questionnaire.

173-4: why do you chose to take this 4 elements as evaluation topics of the
programme? are they in line with the research questions? and with the main five
goals? (132-138)

175: I miss the element 'faculty development' .

180: see before: the pilot group?

180: from april 2011-july 2012: more than one year variation in time and thus
experience of the programme: what does that mean for the results?

196-97: 'organised emerging topics into a list of lessons learned': this is not clear
to me. I want more information about how the analysis is done. As only one
researcher coded the manuscipt: how is guaranteed that personal views and
interpretations are discussed?

197-98: agreement on what? See also the text in the abstract.

What is the role of the research questions or core elements in the analysis and
interpretation of the data?

5. results

205: 198 from how many students?

208-9: how do the means of the interviewees relate to the means of the total
population?

The results are presented according to the research questions: see my
comments above about the research questions and evaluation topics

235-238: this is important information, what does it mean for the redesign?

244-249: where does this information come from?

259-261: you now relate the need for a mentor's view to poor feedback. Why?
The assumption is that with good feedback a better view of development is
possible. Perhaps you need both, and the view of a mentor who closely follows
the student and specific feedback information, see also 310-12.

251-270: do you here present the results for the summative assessment?
and in 271-280 the formative assessment? perhaps you should make that more
clear. You use formative assessment here also in an aggregated way (and not at
a singel assessment point). In my view there is not yet much discussion and
research and practice about how to use formative assessment in this way.
Therefore I would like to see some more explanation.

269: minutes PRC???
6. discussion

In general I would like to structure the discussion more in relation to the design-based model: what do the result mean for the redesign? see also my comments about the research questions.

perhaps it would help the leader to give some headings.

I miss some discussion about the balance between information from assessment points and the information from the mentor.

320-323: from the implementation literature this is no news and very generally formulated. I would prefer more specific information from your results.

323-327: needs more explanation: what is mixed and what is key? Moreover: where do you get this conclusion from?

I miss some deliberation about line 235-237

390-393: did this study find something about peer feedback seeking?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance 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