Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparison of expectations and beliefs about good teaching in an academic day release medical education program

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Comments by Editor Mr Ulep (E)

| E1 | The paper suffers from quite a few flaws, covering the full spectrum from minor spelling errors and overly informal language to problems with the conceptual message of the study | We followed the language correction function of Word (language: English Great Britain) and an "Academic Instruction Manual English". Knowing that this was a first step, we had our revised manuscript corrected and edited by a professional editing service: Translation and Editing Service, Maastricht University Language centre. |
| E2 | What is an "adult attitude" (page 6, first line) | We rewrote the introduction and explained what is to be expected of the residents in a learner centred educational environment |
| E3 | Research questions [1] and [2] are about "good teaching", but teaching is only one aspect of the group process and it would be very helpful if the introduction could be tightened so that it is clear that the paper focuses on teaching, rather than on learning, teacher-student interaction, e.d | Research question 1 focuses on beliefs and expectations of teachers and residents about teaching, Research question 2 focuses on agreement between teachers and residents about teaching Research question 3 concerns communication between teachers and residents about teaching |
| E4 | What does "two groups" (page 7, second line) refer to?; | In the methods section, we explain that we interviewed teachers and resident groups |
| E5 | Is it indeed the case that intact groups were included in the focus group analysis, and why was this done (i.e., why not assemble focus groups by selecting members from different existing groups?); | In the methods section, we explain that, in order to be able to answer the third research question, we decided to include resident groups and teacher who had actually worked with each other. |
| E6 | How did "AtlasTi software" create a first coding dictionary?; | In the methods section, we explain that we used the AtlasTi software package for coding the interviews and for structuring the data. In AtlasTi, we first coded the interviews and next, we sorted the codes into higher categories by creating a so called tree structure. Codes that were related were placed in the tree structure tool. This structure evolved as our understanding of the data advanced. Finally, we discussed the labels that represented the dimensions that we found. |
| E7 | Page 7, second paragraph, first line: you conclude that "Although the teachers see residents as adults, they are inclined to adopt a rather parental attitude." do you mean "parental attitude" or "paternalistic attitude", and how did you arrive at this interpretation?; | We arrived at the interpretation of a parental attitude because teachers take a caring role and tell them what’s best from a caring perspective. Rethinking "parental", we conclude that this refers to a situation where parents actually have the responsibility for children because the latter are under eighteen years old. Paternalistic refers to a situation in which a father figure makes the decisions for the members of the group, regardless of their age. Sometimes, this is considered to be necessary because the members of the group do or cannot know what the consequences of their decisions will be and would not make these decisions if they could overview the consequences (Wall, S, 2009, Self Ownership and Paternalism, in: The Journal of Political Philosophy, jrg. 17). So now we used “paternalistic” in the context of the academic day release program |
| E8 | Discussion section (page 13), "Disagreement itself does not have to be barrier", better is: "Disagreement itself does not need to be barrier"; | We changed "does not have to be" in "does not need to be" |
| E9   | Page 14, lines 11-13: please not that "teaching in pairs" can be ambiguous; in addition, I find your explanation "The specific day release training context. etc." rather speculative and I believe it to be unlikely that teachers express "their interpretations of teaching roles" (what would that mean, to "interpret your teaching role")? | In order to prevent errors, we removed “pairs” and explained the situation of two teachers guiding a group of residents during a longer period of time. In the discussion, we explain that the teachers’ beliefs and expectations result from a psychological therapeutically background, founded by Carl Rogers. In the specific training context of two teachers who agree about teaching and guide the same resident group, teachers tend to translate their beliefs into “teaching as counselling”. |
| E10  | Page 15, last sentence, "The richness of the data.": what is this conclusion based on? Even rich data can be inadequately discussed. | This sentence was removed |
| RD1 | The third sentence possibly relates to the higher educational setting but would not relate to other educational settings. This needs to be clarified. | In the first paragraph, we explain what a learner centered environment is in the residents' educational setting. |
| RD2 | p.6 Please expand on why there are negative consequences for residents if the teacher-learner relationship is not balanced, and what these consequences might be. | We changed this part of the introduction. Our study does not concern possible negative consequences but factors of success and barriers to aligning expectations in an environment where residents are expected to take responsibilities for their learning process. |
| RD3 | The first sentence of the first full paragraph on p.6 is incorrect as it is. Weinstein (to mention only one researcher) has completed a lot of work comparing student and teacher beliefs in the elementary school setting. So, if the statement only applies in higher educational settings this should be clear. | We included literature about the comparison of teacher and student beliefs from elementary and secondary school settings (Weinstein, Brok), and explained that our statement refers to the professional day release program for general practitioners. |
| RD4 | The third research question is not (and actually cannot be) answered in the current paper. Hence it either needs to be discarded or re-framed. | We reframed the research questions to:
1. What are teachers' and residents' expectations and beliefs about what and how to teach in an academic day release program?
2. Do they agree about what and how to teach?
3. Do teachers and residents communicate about what and how to teach? |
| RD5 | Results:
5. There is a discrepancy between the number of participants reported in the Method section (28 teachers and 9 focus groups) and the number included in the demographic table (17 teachers and 11 resident groups). These discrepancies need to be explained. | We adjusted these numbers in the methods and results section. |
| RD6 | In Table 2, the teacher quotes related to teaching do not appear to emphasise a counselling role. I recognise that this is open to interpretation. However, “helping residents to analyse their experiences” and asking them to consider what an experience means to them could be interpreted as asking students to reflect on their practical experience(s) and to link this to their theoretical understandings. There is not necessarily any implication of a counselling role; supporting to students to link theory to practice, perhaps, but this is part of their teaching role. The authors need to reconsider their interpretation and discussion of these results. There would need to be more justification for determining that the teacher statements relate to counselling. | We reconsidered the results section and went through the collection of quotations. We removed table 3 and described the results in the text. Next, we discovered that, while summarizing, some parts of the quotations had been removed, such as the word “counselling” and we inserted the exact quotations. |
| RD7 | Discussion:  
7. Please explain why when teachers and students agree about the educational environment that this contributes to a positive environment. | In the discussion, we explain that agreement about beliefs and expectations makes communication easier. When teachers and resident easy communicate about the residents learning goals and needs, discussing responsibilities regarding the learning process also becomes easier. Under these conditions, a positive learner centered educational environment can be realized. |
| RD8 | 8. An assumption is made that the agreements are superficial and the disagreements meaningful but neither of these value judgements are defined. What constitutes “superficial” and “meaningful”. How can a reader be confident that the discrimination is warranted? | We discussed these assumptions and concluded that “superficial” and “meaningful” did not summarize the findings. We think that teachers and residents agreed at a conceptual level about expectations and beliefs regarding good teaching, but disagreed at an executive level. |
| RD9 | 9. The final sentence in the first paragraph on p.14 (carried over from p.13) refers to a “massive block”. Firstly, this is an emotive expression and has no place in a scientific article. Second, please explain why there would be a block when teachers agree. A block to whom, to what? | We removed “massive block” from the discussion section. Then we briefly explain the specific educational setting and conclude that, because teachers strongly agree in their beliefs and expectations about teaching and also work together in the same resident group, they confirm each other in their translation of teaching as counselling as being the best fit for supporting learning in practice. |
| RD10 | 10. In the discussion, the authors appear to be making claims that the results are generalizable; the data are qualitative so they are not generalizable. This claim needs moderating. | We explain that our results concern the academic day release program |
| RD11 | Minor essential revisions  
Abstract:  
1. Learner-centeredness is not so much an element as it is a theoretical framework.  
Introduction:  
2. In the first paragraph there is a citation 34. Is this correct?  
3. The final sentence on p.5 is definitive and yet the authors suggest that this does not happen. Therefore the language needs moderating. Perhaps: “They should discuss...”  
Methods:  
Participants:  
4. The demographic information pertaining to the participants should be included in the Participants section, not in the Results.  
Procedures:  
5. The resident groups took part in focus groups, not interviews and so the correct terminology should be used.  
Data analysis: comparison:  
6. What are the four dimensions? This | We rewrote the abstract in line with the revisions in the manuscript  
The literature was removed and then imported again after revising the manuscript  
We rewrote this sentence and moderated the language. (line 111-116)  
We did not replace the demographic information table because we could not predict how many participants and which combinations of groups and teachers we could invite and interview. Therefore, we see the participants information as a result and as such, we think it should stay in the results section  
We adjusted the terminology according to this suggestion  
We clarified the dimensions: teacher as a person, knowledge, relationships and teaching |
needs to be clear for the reader.

Results
7. The demographic table would be better placed in the Method section (subsection Participants).

8. Towards the end of p.11 Table 2 is said to contain the dimension “relation” whereas it should be “relationships”.

Discussion:
9. In the Strengths and Limitations section, give examples of “underexposed consequences”.

10. p.15, it is stated that the authors considered bringing in an expert but it seems they did not. If this is considered a limitation, please expand.

Presentation:
1. Throughout the manuscript the authors use both US and UK spelling. Choose one and be consistent.
2. In line 4 of the abstract “of” should be “from”.
3. In the Method section of the Abstract, author’s team should be either author team or authors’ team because there are multiple authors.
4. In the Results section of the Abstract the words “were experienced” are redundant.
   “post graduate” should be one word.
5. Hyphens and the spacing that follows vary in the paper. There should be no space following or before a hyphen.
6. There should be a colon at the end of the first complete sentence on p.9 and then the next two sentences should become one with a comma separating the two parts.
7. Correct “Cohen’s’ d” (p.9).
8. P.9 Table 1 and Dimension 1 are names (proper nouns) and should be capitalised.
9. P.10 should be “general practitioners’ training”.
10. In Table 2, “good organised” should be “well organised”.

We did not replace the demographic table because of the argument that we explained at point 4

We substituted “relation” for “relationships”

We rewrote this part of the strengths and limitations:
“To our knowledge, this is one of the rare qualitative studies to critically compare the teachers’ and residents’ beliefs and expectations about teaching in the academic day release training. The study also offers insights about the possible effects of not communicating about teaching in a learning environment where residents are expected to take responsibilities for their learning process”.
We explained what was meant by “expert”

We asked an editor service to correct and edit the manuscript
Furthermore, we changed “family doctor” in to “general practitioner” which is the right expression for the profession in the UK.
We corrected “of” into “from”
We corrected “author’s team” into “authors’ team”
We removed these words

We asked an editing service to correct and edit the manuscript

We corrected κ

We corrected “general practitioners training” into “general practitioners’ training”
We corrected “good organised” into “well organised”
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<td>11. In line 3, p.14, there should be a comma following “approach”.</td>
<td>We asked an editing service to correct and edit the manuscript</td>
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<td>12. In the last paragraph on p.14, “plays” should be “play”.</td>
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<td>13. P.15, either “teacher and resident groups” or “teachers’ and residents’ groups”.</td>
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**RD12**  
**Discretionary revisions**  
**Abstract:**  
1. In the Results section of the Abstract, the second sentence is ambiguous; consider re-wording.  
2. In the Discussion section of the Abstract the final sentence is clumsily phrased; consider re-wording positively, for example by beginning: According to the residents, the absence of a proper dialogue...  

**Results:**  
3. The first sentence on p.11 is ambiguous. Consider re-wording.  
4. In Table 2, Knowledge and expertise, the teachers show an awareness of the need to understand and learn about pedagogy (teaching methods). It is hard to see why residents would think about this. It seems appropriate that they would focus on the knowledge they are receiving from their teachers. This is not necessarily a change for the paper but a point that is possibly worth considering.  
5. The second sentence of the Strengths and Limitations section is not grammatically correct and needs re-wording.  

**We rewrote the abstract in line with the revisions in the manuscript**  
We reconsidered the abstract sections and changed in the discussion as follows:  
According to the residents, the absence of a proper dialogue regarding issues about expectations and beliefs was the biggest barrier for alignment and a supportive learner-centred environment and not so much the disagreement about beliefs and expectations.  
This sentence was removed  
We think that we explained the possibly conflicting beliefs of teachers and residents about the type of knowledge that is needed in the academic day release program. The residents expected their teachers to show medical expert knowledge, so that discussions about residents’ experiences with difficult situations can be raised to a higher level.  
We changed the text of the strengths and limitations section as follows: To our knowledge, this is one of the rare qualitative studies to critically compare the teachers’ and residents’ beliefs and expectations about teaching in the academic day release training. The study also offers insights into the possible consequences of not communicating about teaching in a learning environment where residents are expected to take responsibilities for their learning process.
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<td>1) The title discusses that the comparison is being made within “formal postgraduate medical education” which is very broad, when in fact they state that the setting which they were studying was an &quot;academic day release program.&quot; I am not sure that they did sufficient analysis/abstraction and/or theory-building beyond what appears to be a more thematic analysis approach to be able to make theory on postgraduate medical education as a whole. The title should reflect the exact setting that they are studying, and not make claims about abstraction to the level of postgraduate medical training.</td>
<td>2) The authors seem to answer their first two research questions, but do not seem to address the third research question. They do not display in the results how participants deal with disagreements, and briefly talk about it in the discussion.</td>
<td>3) The Methods section lacks a description of the setting in which the research was conducted to give the reader a framework for understanding what is being studied.</td>
<td>4) Overall, the results section lacks an organization. I expected a summary statement of the 4 domains that were identified, and then a clear organization of the structure within those domains, including similarities and differences between the two groups. It was very hard to follow this data, and needs better organization in the manuscript.</td>
<td>5) The discussion seems a bit informal (see &quot;at first sight,&quot; and then &quot;a closer look.&quot;) It does not discuss a clear summary of the work, and seems to make some unfounded claims. They tie in theoretical background work, but do not tie it to ongoing research in the area.</td>
<td>6) In the strengths and limitations section, the authors state: &quot;We intended to follow up on this complexity...&quot; This sounds like they did not follow-up. If they did not, they should state why.</td>
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<td>We changed the title in to “Comparison of expectations and beliefs about good teaching in an academic day release medical education program. A qualitative study”</td>
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<td>In the beginning of the discussion, we summarize the findings: dimensions, points of agreement and points of disagreement and present a discussion about the findings and relation with research</td>
<td>We rewrote the discussion, and asked the editing service to help us with a more academic style of writing. We renewed our literature search and inserted recent literature</td>
<td>We changed this sentence into: “We followed up on this complexity by conscientiously conducting and discussing the subsequent research steps with an experienced researcher’s team.”</td>
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| S1 | Minor Essential Revisions  
1) Citations are cited out of order (see introduction section)  
2) There are multiple points throughout the manuscript in which the authors fail to use parallel structure when using coordinating conjunctions (commas, and, or). For example, sentence 2 of the abstract, "alignment of expectations about teaching" and "a supportive learner-teacher environment" are not parallel. For other examples, see a) abstract results section, sentence 2; b) discussion section, sentence 4 (starting: "A closer look,").  
3) I did not understand from reading the paper exactly what an academic day-release program was and why that was the setting chosen for studying learner-centeredness  
4) In the introduction, second paragraph, last sentence, the authors state that it is plausible that a "not balanced" relationship can be negative for professional development. Please outline support for that comment (3 articles were cited).  
5) In the methods section, the authors discuss the use of a Cohen’s d statistic. I am not familiar with the use of this statistic in qualitative work, and when I reviewed of the use of this statistical measure, I do not understand how they might have used it in this case. Some more explanation of why they used it and how they used this data would be helpful.  
6) Table 2 is awkward to read, and does not contain the total number of participants in each category.  
7) On page 11, the last sentence refers to table 2. I think it was meant to say table 3.  |
|---|---|
| S2 | We removed and then again imported the literature  
We followed the language correction function of Word (language: English Great Britain) and an “Academic Instruction Manual English”. Knowing that this is a first step, we had our revised manuscript corrected and edited by a professional editing service.  
In the introduction, we explain that in the academic day release program, a learner – centered approach is necessary because the program should support learning in practice. The residents are “responsible for their learning process” and are expected to express their learning goals and needs. In line with the rewriting of the introduction, we explain what the importance is of communication between teachers and residents in a supportive learner – centered educational environment. The results show lack of communication instead of lack of relationships. In the introduction we corrected this because the research questions and collected data were about agreement and disagreement between teachers’ and residents’ beliefs and expectations and the importance of communication about these.  
It was Kappa that we used as a measure for inter rater reliability and we changed this in the text  
We corrected this table and the numbers of the tables in the manuscript. |