Author's response to reviews

Title: Student-centred approach in a patient-centred course: Analysis of students' descriptive evaluations in the transition to clinical education

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Author's response to reviews:

To the Editor of BMC Medical Education

Article title: Impact of students' descriptive evaluations on course development in the transition to clinical education (new title)
MS ID: 6383673139305358
Authors: Mats Wahlqvist, Annika Skott, Cecilia Bjorkelund, Gosta Dahlgren, Kirsti Lonka and Bengt Mattsson
Journal: BMC Medical Education

Dear Sir,
Many thanks for your fast reply and valuable comments from reviewers.

The manuscript have been revised according to comments of reviewers. Below, we address the comments with a point-by-point response, starting with referee AB.

Yours sincerely
Mats Wahlqvist

Referee AB

Major Compulsory Revisions

AB 1 Narrowing the focus of the article, concentration on evaluation/implementation

We agree to the comment that there is a discrepancy in the aims as they are expressed in the abstract and in the manuscript. We have focused on the impact of students descriptive evaluations on course development.

Major revisions of the manuscript has been made according to a narrowed focus of the aims and changes are made in the following sections:

Title The title is now changed and mirrors the content of the manuscript.
Abstract Revised accordingly. Course evaluation and students' impact on course development is focused.
Background
Page 3
Line 8-10 The opening question and the introducing lines are changed.

Page 3-4 A new paragraph is added, emphasizing student evaluation methods in the transition. Some scientific considerations are added.

Page 4 A new headline 'Context' has been inserted in order to separate the description of the course from the course evaluation.

Page 5
Line 8 From In 1995..., some lines are added in order to explain the new evaluation method used inspired by educational research. A new reference has been added.

Page 5
Line 15-16 Student evaluations as a tool for listening is changed to italics and the word understanding has been added.

Page 5
Line 18-22 The evaluation cycle (Fig 1) and data from course documents in course development are introduced at this point.

Page 5, last paragraph,
Line 24-25 Revision of aims: from plural to singular. The focus is the former aims 2, "to study the correspondence between students' descriptive evaluations and key features of course development over five years".

Results
Page 9
first paragraph
Line 15-19 A new introduction in a few lines

Page 10
Line 22-24 I Analysis of students' descriptive evaluations
Introducing text is shortened.

Page 13
Line 11-14 II Analysis of key features of course development
Four sentences dropped in the middle, redundant information.

Page 14
Line 2-13 III Correspondence between main themes of students' descriptive evaluations and key features of course development:
Some sentences have been added in order to elicit the correspondence asked for.

Discussion
Page 15-16 A new introducing paragraph.

Page 15
Line 5-21 Comments on method
Support for credibility of data are added in a few sentences, including a new reference.

Page 17-18 Comments of results
This section has been reworked and revised according to a narrowed focus. Changes include new sentences addressing the evaluation method. The students' reactions of the course is lessened.

AB 2 Cause-effect relations cannot be elicited by qualitative data

Results
Page 12
Line 5-12 Theme 'A growing self-awareness and confidence' is changed after re-analysis of raw material. We agree that cause-effect relations cannot be inferred from qualitative methods.
Text following the categories 'Self-reflection of learning' and 'More aware of patient's perspective' has been revised. The new heading of the theme is a more neutral expression and does not indicate cause-effect relations.

Discussion
Page 18
Line 7-8 Comments on results
The phrase "examination skills seemed to have a synergistic effect on learning consultation skills" is excluded. Instead, "learning examination skills seemed to enhance motivation for learning consultation skills in the transitional period" is used.

Conclusions
Conclusions are similarly reworked and revised according to limitation of aims.

AB 3 The results....are meagre.

Table 2 Additional citations underpinning the new theme heading 'Awareness and confidence' are inserted.

AB 4 On pre-understandings

Discussion
Page 16
Line 20-21 Comments on method
How pre-understandings were handled are made more clear and a reference of the used procedure supplied.

Minor Essential Revisions

AB 5 Title of manuscript.
The title of the manuscript has now been changed. We use the concept "Student-centred" as it is meant in the educational literature (i.e. Newble DI, Cannon R. A Handbook for Teachers in Medical Education, p 10. Student-centred learning) The concept is contrasting conventional teaching. There might be a linguistic risk by excluding the word "learning" - and at some instances "learner-centred" is used instead in the manuscript. However, we think that educational concepts are different from relational attitudes.

AB 6 Be careful with the word narratives
We agree, changes have been made.

Referee TT

General
The comment that the manuscript contain a significant amount of work and is generally well constructed was reassuring.

Minor essential revisions

TT 1 More references on open evaluation form
Page 5
Line 5-7
The referee asks for more references on open-ended evaluation forms. In the context of medical education, we could not find any further references. Consequently, we have stressed the novelty of this approach in Background and Discussion. The influence of courses and research of learning in higher education is mentioned and supported by a new reference.

TT 2 Missing verb
Page 12
Line 1 According to referees suggestion we have added a verb.

TT 3 Curriculum reform statement unsupported

Results
Page 13
Line 8-10 The key features and the consequences of the curriculum reform has been added in a few sentences, according to analysis result in Table 3.

TT 4 Language editing
Page 13
Line 12 We agree to the comment. "too high an ambition" has been replaced by "overambitious goals".

Additional changes, not referring to reviewers comments

Method
Page 8
Point 3
Line 6 the word 'stories' is changed to 'descriptions'.

Results
Page 10
Line 14 'Active and self-directed learning' is changed and 'To be active and to have a choice' is used instead. Accordingly, the theme is changed in Table 2.

Furthermore, minor linguistic changes have been made in order to improve clarity of the content.