Reviewer’s report

Title: Learning to Mark: a qualitative study of the experiences and concerns of medical markers.

Version: 1 Date: 27 January 2006

Reviewer: Sarah Peters

Reviewer’s report:

General
Using a qualitative methodology, this paper presents analysis of GP teachers’ experiences of marking undergraduate assessments. The methodology used is appropriate and the trustworthiness of the data increased due to a respondent validation exercise. The manuscript is reasonably clearly and concisely written and provides a useful addition to the literature of assessment in undergraduate medical education.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

No theoretical framework is provided for the analysis. To interpret the findings, this is essential. Further details are necessary.

The Results and Discussion sections are currently written as a single section. The Results section should include the presentation of themes (with supportive quotations). Discussion of the meaning and implications of these findings and the study design should be presented separately.

The small sample was entirely made up of GP teachers. Whilst this does not invalidate the findings, some discussion of this weakness in the study and implications of this is important.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The study is not a systematic review, hence details of the literature search are unnecessary; it is assumed relevant literature has been comprehensively studied.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

A figure/box presenting the themes and key supportive quotations would help the reader navigate the Results.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests