Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of a learner-designed course for teaching health research skills in Ghana

Version: 2 Date: 29 March 2007

Reviewer: Cindy L Lam

Reviewer's report:

General
The revised manuscript is well written and the results are clearly presented. It has shown very positive effects of a research training course provided by a UK University to a University in Ghana, Africa with the use of a multi-method evaluation model. The findings are encouraging and interesting for other educators who are interested in cross-cultural and cross-country skills transfer.

However, the stated aim of the paper does not seem to match the results and discussion. It is stated at the end of the Introduction that the aim was to test whether an evaluation model developed in Western countries could be applied to a course delivered in other parts of the world, but the results and discussion are mainly on the evaluation of the course. It is not clear what the outcome measure on 'the development/applicability' of the evaluation model are and little discussion of the evaluation model. It needs to be clarified whether the 'evaluation model' was the object of study or a study tool.

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

1. The stated aim may need to be revised to coincide with the results and discussion of the paper or vice versa.
2. If the evaluation model is used as a study tool, it should be described more clearly in the introduction or methods section.
3. It is stated many times that the learners were involved in the course design but there is no details. A brief description of how and what they were involved in would help readers judge the generalizability of the process and results.
4. The timing of the course evaluation in relation to that of the student assessment should be stated clearly in the methods.
5. The limitations of the results especially in relation to the possible bias of self-reported competence from the learners in response to an evaluation administered by their teachers.

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

1. It is necessary to provide some details on the course content and assessment methods but this could be tightened.
2. I am not sure whether ‘wealthy country’ Vs. ‘poor country’ are the most appropriate labels for the countries described in the paper.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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