Reviewer's report

Title: A scoping review about conference objectives and evaluative practices: How do we get more out of them?

Version: 1 Date: 17 March 2012

Reviewer: Sandy Oliver

Reviewer's report:

Given the effort invested by organisers and participants in large multi day meetings, and the growth in multi-disciplinary working, this paper addresses an important and timely issue.

It is a well argued and thought provoking paper. It has employed an appropriate methodology for synthesising the theories and methods for conference evaluation reported in the academic literature. The search was multi-disciplinary. The sampling frame was chosen not to capture all the literature, but to capture a spread of disciplines. This is appropriate for a synthesis that aims to generate theory rather than a synthesis that aims to test a hypothesis. It is notable (but not noted by the authors) that the one paper identified that offers a theory specific to conference settings (new learning) is not aligned with any particular profession or sector, and therefore arguably applicable to any.

I did not understand the phrase ‘conference equity’ (middle page 10)

Minor Essential Revisions

The evaluation framework illustrated in figure 2 is difficult to assimilate given the number of criss-crossing lines. It would be easier to see the relationships if some of the lines were coded visually, such as (- - - - - -) or (-- --- -- -- -- --) or (==========).

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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