Author’s response to reviews

Title: Evolving the theory and praxis of knowledge translation through social interaction: A social phenomenological study

Authors:

Carol L McWilliam Dr. (cmcwill@uwo.ca)
Anita Kothari Dr. (akothari@uwo.ca)
Catherine Ward-Griffin Dr. (cwg@uwo.ca)
Dorothy Forbes Dr. (dforbes6@uwo.ca)
Beverley Leipert Dr. (bleipert@uwo.ca)
SW-CCAC Home Care Collaboration the (Sandra.Coleman@sw.ccac-ont.ca)

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor:

RE: Manuscript 1316932936240217
TITLE: Evolving the theory and praxis of knowledge translation through social interaction: a social phenomenological study

Attached please find a revised version of this manuscript to Implementation Science. Modifications have been made in keeping with the reviewer critiques, as follows:

Reviewer #1:
1. The barriers and facilitators of KT were indeed extensively attributable to social construction. The interpretation of these data has been revised to better communicate this (p.18, para 1; p. 22, para 2, last sentence). The relevance of the social construction of barriers and facilitators to considerations of context in designing and implementing social interaction KT initiatives has been addressed in the “Discussion” section (p. 25, para 2). The Checkland et al (2007) paper has been cited to further substantiate this phenomenon.

2. The contributions of process evaluation of new policy initiatives and complex intervention implementation have been elaborated. Specific revisions appear in the introduction (p.6, para 2), the review of related literature informing social interaction KT (p.10 para 2), and in delineating how the findings of this study portray the relevance of the principles of process evaluation to the process of social interaction KT (p. 23, para 3). The Pawson and Tilley (2004) paper, the Kennedy et al (2005) paper and other relevant papers have been cited in the manuscript and added to the references.

3. The May et al. (2007) paper does indeed help to contextualize the findings of the present study. The study reported in this manuscript was initially conceptualized in 2005 and implemented in 2006, preceding the May et al. (2007) publication. At that time, we used the PARISH framework (Rycroft-Malone, 2002; Rycroft-Malone et al., 2004) to contextualize and inform our considerations of content, context and facilitation, as reported. To incorporate the May et al (2007) paper, we have followed the accepted approach to integrating literature review in phenomenological research. Specifically, researchers search out and make links to other relevant literature as the interpretive analysis and its potential implications are considered and elaborated. Accordingly, we have used the theory-building contributions of May et al. (2007) to contextualize the discussion of our study findings, elaborating how our findings link to the May et al. work. (p. 23, para 3).

We very much appreciate Dr. Rogers’ time and effort in directing us to all of the preceding, highly relevant publications.

Reviewer #2:
1. Participatory action projects which simultaneously constitute the enacting of new interventions and investigation of the processes contained therein are inherently complex. We have elaborated further details to clarify the focus of this paper (Abstract, p. 3, para 1 & 2; p. 6, para 3- p.7, para 1). Specifically, the KT undertaken with participants in this project was designed as a participatory action intervention. This intervention was the focus of several qualitative studies and one quantitative study addressing different research questions. The social phenomenological study reported in this manuscript, conducted during the second one-year action cycle, addressed one research question (Abstract, p. 3, para 1, last sentence; Background, p. 12, para 3, last sentence) with the aim of obtaining qualitative evidence to enhance implementation scientists’ understanding of the process of social interaction KT. The research methodology, social phenomenology, has been further explicated (p. 12, para 4 – p. 13,
para 1). Social phenomenologists cannot know in advance what will emerge from their exploration of social actions. In keeping with the selected research methodology, the study findings ultimately elicited constitute a theoretical model or “framework”, which affords new insights informing the theory and practice of social interaction KT. The purpose of this paper is to share these findings (p7, para1, last sentence).

2. The abstract (pp.3 - 4) has been revised to clarify the links between the stated aim, approach and conclusions.

3. The meaning of “professional craftsmanship” has been elaborated and referenced (p.7, para 3 - 8, para 1). The claim that “even the most academically-oriented professionals inevitably combine research results ... with tacit or “how to” knowledge and humanistic understanding acquired from experiential learning, professional training and socialization, and information about the local context” has been reworded and substantiated, using several additional citations (p.8, para 1).

4. As stated in the “Background section (p.8, para 2), the intent of our extensive elaboration of the PARiSH and KTA frameworks is to convey their respective contributions to contextualizing and informing our considerations of the content, context and facilitation strategies of the KT intervention (as per the PARiSH framework), and the action strategy adopted for implementation (the KTA framework). To further emphasize this intent, we have further elaborated this point under the “KT Intervention” sub-heading (p14, para 2), and in the ‘Discussion” section (p. 23, para 3, last sentence).

5. With due respect for the diversity and caliber of the readership of *Implementation Science*, we have attempted to briefly clarify the meaning and relationships among social phenomenology, social constructivism and PAR, and how they were used in this project (p.6, last sentence in para 2, p.6, para 3, and p.7, para1), providing citations should readers wish to learn more about these concepts. We also have provided a more detailed explanation of how social phenomenology was actually applied in conducting this study and the reasons for its selection (p.13, para 1). To avoid confusion and keep explanations of the linkages straightforward, we have deleted reference to the epistemological lens used in conducting our investigation, namely, interpretivism, the appropriate lens for conducting social phenomenology (Schwandt, 2000, *In: Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Ed.)*). We also have not elaborated theory illuminating social constructivism as the ontology of the intervention, and the links between social constructivism and interpretivism. In discussing epistemology, the terms “constructivism” and “interpretivism” are used interchangeably by some disciplines, particularly the social sciences, in which constructivism as an epistemology is simply “a more recent vintage than interpretivist thinking” (Schwandt, 1994, *In: Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (1st Ed.)*, p.125). Should the editor believe that further detail is necessary, we would be prepared to provide end notes for this purpose.

6. We have clarified that the KT intervention was premised on a participatory action approach (p.14, first sentence in first para under “KT Intervention”). As elaborated in #1, above, we have provided a fuller description of social phenomenology and added more description about the methods, including more detail about the participants, specifically who was involved, (p.16, para 2, under “Sample”), what data were incorporated and over what time period (p.16, para 3, under “Data Collection”). How the action groups worked is detailed under “KT Intervention” (p.15, para 3).

7. We have introduced sub-headings under “Methodology”, indicating details of: 1. the “Design” (in keeping with social phenomenological approaches, paying due attention to the “Context”, the “Evidence” and the “KT Intervention”, that contextualize and inform the design of the overall project) and 2. “Research Methods” (with sub-sections identifying the “Sample”, “Data Collection”, “Data Analysis” and “Authenticity” methods of this particular study) (pp.12 – 17). The terms “methodology” (i.e., overarching approach) and “methods” (i.e., research techniques) are differentiated in interpretive research (Smith, J & Heshusius, L. (1986). Closing down the conversation: the end of the quantitative-qualitative debate among educational inquirers. *Educational Researcher, 4-12*). Should the Editor prefer to retain “Methods” as the major section
heading, we will do that, perhaps promoting clarity but changing the “research methods” subsection under the major section heading by re-labeling it to “study strategies”, “study procedures” or whatever the editor would prefer.

8. The criteria for the purposive sampling of data have been further elaborated (under “Data Collection”, p.16, para 2). The researchers’ role within the KT intervention approach may be found under “KT Intervention” (p. 15, para 1). Details elaborating what researchers recorded in field notes (p. 16, para 2, last sentence under “Data Collection”), and how these data were used indirectly in the interpretive analysis (p. 17, para 2, second sentence, under “Data Analysis”) have also been added.

9. The approach to and levels of interpretive analysis are explained and referenced under “Data Analysis” (p. 16, para 4- p. 17, para 1). As we were exploring the nature of a social process, the first level constructs constitute four patterns of social interaction that might be considered to be the “themes” that emerged from our first level of interpretation. The second level of interpretation constitutes an ideal-typical construct, the holistic interpretation of the meaning of the actions of human beings from which the social reality originates (in this study, a model of social interaction KT). Interpretive analysis entails a cyclical hermeneutic process of immersing oneself in the data, reflecting upon and trying to make sense of what is going on, and crystallizing greater depth of understanding. This process is on-going over a prolonged period of time, and in phenomenology, is more of a creative act than is the prescribed leveled coding approach, constant comparative analysis, used for the more familiar grounded theory method. Accordingly, prior to identifying first level constructs, the researchers identified and examined a wide variety of process inputs, actions, and outcomes, with due consideration of the context, players, and social interaction. But these were not coded as a “level of interpretation” to get to the four patterns as the first level constructs. Rather, they were “intuited”, “described”, and their “modes of appearing” were watched for across all data, as we consciously explored the KT process, analyzing and interpreting “meanings which were not immediately manifest” (Spiegelberg, 1982). Records of ideas were kept and carried forward in subsequent analysis meetings for the purposes of facilitating the team’s hermeneutic analysis and ultimate interpretation of the experience.

10. The points made in the discussion constitute insights arising from the interpretive findings. We did not prescribe a priori that participants act as transformative leaders. To clarify this, we have elaborated the evolution of the transformative leader role (under “The Facilitation”, p. 27, para 2 – p. 28, para 1).

11. Incorporating the Checkland et al. (2007) reference suggested by Reviewer #1, we have further explicated how participants may socially construct their context and how we envision setting the stage so that this may happen in KT initiatives (see “The Context” section, p. 25, para 2 - p. 26, para 1)

12. We have added a new third para under the “Conclusion” section, unpacking the issue of modification of research findings, adding several substantiating citations, including some from the Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice (p. 29, para 2).

13. “Minor Essential Revisions”: We have provided the label for Figure 1. As the term(s) viewed to reflect the “wrong use” are not specified, we have not been able to address this critique beyond re-reading the manuscript and revising it, as described. We have added “local information” and the Rycroft-Malone et al. (2004) citation (“Background”, p. 8, para 1).

Thank you for facilitating the review process.

Sincerely,

Carol McWilliam, MScN, EdD
Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences
The University of Western Ontario
London, ON, N6A 5C1