Reviewer’s report

Title: Designing faculty development: lessons learnt from a qualitative interpretivist study exploring students' expectations and experiences of clinical teaching

Version: 0 Date: 10 Jun 2018

Reviewer: Esther de Groot

Reviewer's report:

Overall I enjoyed reading this paper. The main points that need further attention are

1. the first sentence, which is not only incorrect an sich but is also reflected in the choices about what results to present. A lot of work exists about learning in the clinical workspace and the lack of supervision there. So the first part of the results read like a 'been there' section. Later on, when you bring up the point of students' agency, it becomes more interesting and relevant. Even though this lack of agency feels well known also. Therefore, I would describe on a few themes in more detail, with quotations, and not the long list of opinions from the beginning of the results section.

2. The reasoning for interviewing students when thinking about faculty. It is possible but it is not clarified enough.

3. I get the feeling there a three ideas in the paper competing for attention. In the abstract at first the paper seems to be about "their perspectives on how learning during clinical training could be strengthened" but the ideas of students themselves about strengthening were not clearly present later on. Later, there is a shift to the difference between expectations and experience and then, suddenly, it is all about students' agency.

4. I think the papers got potential and is (apart from the part referred to in your first sentence) nicely embedded in the literature but you need to read it again with a fresh pair of eyes (and adjust it).

Background

The first sentence needs to be changed. Even though a lot more could be learned about their learning in the clinical environment, a black box suggest that nobody bothered to study this before. This is not true.

"In the clinical environment, education has been called a 'black box' because so little is known about what, how, and under which conditions students learn in this context [1]".
This sentence about cognitive apprenticeship seems to be a bit 'out of space', as the rest of the paragraph is about the supervisor and about social learning. "The similarity with situated learning can be seen in the notion of a cognitive apprenticeship through which participation in meaningful work facilitates the learner joining the community of practice [10]".

There is a gap in the argumentation from the need for faculty development to "We set out to understand students' expectations of, and role in, clinical learning as an important perspective when considering strengthening faculty development initiatives for clinical teachers". I think I understand what you mean (especially later on when I read the questions that you ask) but it is not self-evident to start with students when you think about faculty development.

Methods
You indicate that you use qualitative research for "understanding the lived experiences of students", then a focus group approach is not very logical, and not in line with "explore each group's "attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas"". I would have expected individual interviews, but there is nothing you can do about that of course, just look at the way you write it down. .

There is a contradiction between (in methods) "students' perspectives on how clinical teaching could be strengthened". and (in results) "to explore students' experience of clinical teaching". Reading the questions that you asked them, I think the second one is more accurate. And, reading later on "to understand students' expectations of, and role in, clinical learning and what this means for strengthening faculty development initiatives for clinical teachers". These statements should be 'harmonized'.

Results
I trust that you asked about their expectations as well but in the main questions, it is only about experiences and suggestions for improvement. And, because the groups took place after their clerkships, how come they have a clear impression on what they expected beforehand? You need to clarify.
In the first quotation there is a sentence which perhaps is translated in English but is not clear: "That mentality to be able to give back because you have been privileged enough to get is not present in all".

Why is "get to sit in with the doctor during clinic" not "seeing clinicians in action"?

"Students realised that learning was often accompanied by being a bit uncomfortable.

'At the end of the day, it comes down to you remain the student. There is nothing you can do about it. … be aware of the fact that we are sometimes scared to approach them"

The sentence about being a bit uncomfortable is not seen in the quotation. Perhaps (not sure) they mean it as a kind of advice to supervisors who should realise that students are often afraid to ask?

In this statement (which is interesting) "Students did not always recognise the opportunities for learning inherent in everyday clinical tasks" it is clear that there is a tension in your design because if you want to know more about what could be done about faculty development, you should analyse from the perspective of what students think about what supervisors could do. Or, in the introduction, clarify the gap better between 'need to know more about faculty development' and 'we asked students'. So, yes, please include the quotation about the X-rays but think about the interpretation or about the way it is included in your paper.

"It seems clear that the role of the clinical teacher to not only offer engagement experiences (affordances), but also to foster students' sense of agency is pivotal in maximising the potential of clinical learning. Therefore, we suggest that faculty development initiatives need to more intentionally incorporate these aspects when considering how to strengthen clinicians in their teaching role"..

I agree with this and think this is an interesting message from your study but it is unknown whether clinicians do this already, whether students suggested this after questions about how it could be improved. Perhaps it would help when you make a clearer distinction between perspectives of your respondents and your ideas afterwards, after this study. Incorporating these thought in a paragraph about future research/ future actions would make it clearer. And perhaps some elaborations on HOW clinicians could learn to influence students' sense of urgency would help (and be interesting, even when it is first of all a discussion after your study). You do so on top of page 20 but still.
You should reflect in the limitations section on the fact that you did group interviews. Some themes sound great but when I think that there were expressed in group interview, it become less clear whether all students agree that ‘waiting for the supervisor to do something’ was the main theme from these groups.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**

If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**

If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**

If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**

If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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