Reviewer’s report

Title: Learning relationships in community-based service-learning: a social network analysis

Version: 0 Date: 21 Mar 2018

Reviewer: Joanna Tai

Reviewer’s report:

This paper provides an interesting perspective on learning relationships for allied health students on non-traditional community based placements. It helps to reveal more of what happens in the "black box" of learning on clinical placements.

Background: a well-argued introduction to the topic and reasons for doing the research in this way.

Methods: Research context - provides a good description of the program, but how does this contrast to standard allied health placements? this may be something to pick up in the discussion.

Results: I am less familiar with the social network analysis methods and reporting, but it seems to have been explained and reported on well. In Table 2, given you only have 10 participants, is the "average number of learning relations" the single best statistic to present for each subgroup? Do the numbers change much when using the median instead? I note you have the overall range at the bottom of the table. I would be curious to know the range for each type of individual too but this may make it a little messy and overcrowded.

Discussion: Well discussed, good coverage of limitations. Are there implications for other models of learning that are not community based, or are more traditional? could you also comment on future implications/suggestions for social network analysis applications within the field of health professions education research?

Minor typos which I have identified - there may be more.

Page 5 , line 20 - "practiced based learning" - should be "practice based learning"?

Page 6, line 56 - "developed with in a fifteen year collaboration" - think "with" is extraneous

Page 7, line 11 - "includes fly-in-fly-out" - should be includes *a* fly-in-fly-out?

Page 11, line 34 - "students' perceived" - the apostrophe is unnecessary

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.

Unable to assess

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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