

Author's response to reviews

Title: Can learning organisations survive in the newer NHS?

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Version: 2 Date: 22 September 2006

Author's response to reviews: see over



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19th September 2006

Dear Robbie,

Thank you for the reviewers' responses to this submission. With this letter comes a revised version of the paper. In response to the reviewers' suggestions (starting the major points then grouping the minor ones together for easier presentation), we have altered the paper as follows:

Major revisions

<i>Referee comment</i>	<i>Revision to paper</i>
1. Status of the paper:	Substantially increased quantity of secondary research used and explicitly cited. Methods section added.
2. The observations made and arguments developed are necessarily selective, partial and idiosyncratic	Methods section states rationale for selection of empirical observations and definitional criteria. Selection of empirical observations widened and balanced accordingly.
3. Sparse use of references ... Assertions ought to be better supported by evidence and reference	Empirical claims limited to those with evidential support, mostly from published research which is now cited.
4. Positing the NHS as whole as a 'learning organization' sets up a straw man	Now dealt with in the final section.
5. The paper is often confused as to whether it is assessing organisational learning in the NHS or the NHS as a learning organization ... needs to be much clearer about what is its level of analysis.	Three levels of analysis (whole-system, single organisation, individual person) now explained in methods section and explicitly differentiated throughout the analysis.
6. Unclear what the authors' final stance was.	Discussion section re-written to make this explicit.
7. At times the observations made relate more to individual rather than organisational learning	Observations relating to whole-system, single organisation, individual-person levels of analysis are now explicitly differentiated throughout.

Professor Mary Watkins
 PhD MN RN RMN
 Dean

8. It is not clear that ... policy shifts always reach down deep enough within health care organizations to disrupt clinical team function.	Question raised in discussion on methods. Evidence adduced in section on NHS.
9. Article asserts only negative consequences of competition.	Competition now also discussed as a possible stimulus to learning organisations.

Minor Revisions

1. Double-loop learning ... entails setting a different organisational course through re-thinking intended goals and directions.
Point added in section on triple learning.
2. Senge, in Sloan Management Review ... volume number is 32 not 31.
Corrected in references
3. Use as subheadings: ABSTRACT, INTRODUCTION, KEY POINTS ABOUT LEARNING ORGANISATIONS, with subheadings under this of key points 1-4, WHAT WOULD BE EVIDENCE OF A LEARNING ORGANISATION?, FROM 1998-2006: CAN THE CURRENT NHS etc and DISCUSSION.
Headings simplified along these lines and made more uniform.
4. Discretionary Revisions
 - (a) References to official definitions of clinical governance and dissenting voices.
Both types of reference added
 - (b) Put 'modernise' in the first sentence of the introduction into quotation marks as a nod towards the essential ambiguity of the concept
Done.

We hope that these changes have now produced a publishable paper but if anything more remains to be done, please do not hesitate to ask. Whether this paper now qualifies as a research or a debates paper is of course for you the editors to decide.

Yours sincerely,



Rod Sheaff