

Author's response to reviews

Title: Evolution of Wenger's Concept of Community of Practice

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Author's response to reviews: see over



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October 31, 2008

Dr. Brian Mittman
Editors-in-Chief, *Implementation Science*
1800 Century Place, Suite 250
Atlanta, GA 30345-4300

Dear Dr Mittman,

RE: Evolution of Wenger's Concept of Community of Practice

Enclosed please find the revision of the abovementioned paper and our response to the reviewers. To ensure clarity, we have highlighted sections where major changes have been made.

We would like to thank the reviewers for their thoughtful comments, which have helped to improve the manuscript.

We look forward to your decision about this manuscript.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Linda Li'.

Linda Li, PT, PhD

Response to Reviewers

Manuscript title: Evolution of Wenger's Concept of Community of Practice

Date: October 31, 2008

The authors wish to thank the Reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions. Below please find our response. We have highlighted sections in the manuscript where major changes were made.

Response to Ms. Eleanor Jackson-Bowers's comments

1. *"The insights in the article are not new in the community of practice literature, and the authors' cite some references which make the same observations, so the implications for research, and also for service development, are of considerable importance to the field. Are there varieties of research synthesis that may be more suitable than systematic review? How can research deal with ambiguity of concepts?"*

- We agree that there is considerable literature about the use of CoP and the CoP concept and that a research synthesis paper would be interesting. In fact, we have completed a research synthesis of the CoP literature from the business and health care sectors using the meta-narrative technique. This paper is under review by *Milbank Quarterly* and we have summarised the results in [Table 1 \(pg. 22\)](#).

In the current critique of Wenger's concept of CoP, we conducted a detailed analysis of the concept after experiencing difficulties in differentiating what was/was not a CoP in the research synthesis project. We agree that our observations have implications for research and for team development, and have added a concluding statement about future directions ([pg. 16, 2nd paragraph](#)).

2. *"In several places communities of practice are referred to as "informal learning organizations". I suggest a better word is "informal learning networks".*

- We have made changes to the manuscript as per the reviewer's suggestion.

Response to Dr. Stephen Manske's comments

1. *"Purpose of the paper and discussion to suit this purpose. The overall objective of the paper is unclear, and begs the question of 'to what end'? To our way of thinking it would be effective to identify promising directions emerging from the critique. Yet the discussion leaves us lacking any clear sense of where to head besides seeking greater precision."*

- We have followed the reviewer's suggestion to clarify the objective of this paper and provide an outline of the discussion ([pg. 3, 2nd paragraph](#)). Also, we have added a concluding paragraph about future directions ([pg. 16, 2nd paragraph](#)).

2. *"Methodology: Essentially, the authors have completed a systematic review of literature around the CoP concept. (If it is not a systematic review, then they need to justify why not). The paper lacks the specificity needed to judge the adequacy of the systematic review implementation. While the authors may argue that word limits prevent them from addressing all of the following, they need to provide a better foundation for their critique of CoP."*

- We appreciate the reviewer’s comment and agree that the description of the methodology can be improved. We have completed a research synthesis on CoPs in the business and health care sectors, and the results are reported in a separate manuscript that is currently under review by *Milbank Quarterly*. The findings are summarised in [Table 1 \(pg. 22\)](#).
3. “Discussion needs to better point where the field can and should head.”
- .A concluding paragraph about the future direction for research has been added ([pg. 16, 2nd paragraph](#)).