



EBL 101

Disseminating Your Research

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In terms of looking at all the steps of evidence based library and information practice, we're almost home! The final thing to consider once you have gone through the process is disseminating your work. Whether you have used the evidence base to inform your practice or decision making, or you have conducted your own research study to do the same, disseminating the results is beneficial for a number of reasons. Crumley and Koufogiannakis (2002) state that "perhaps the largest obstacle in finding library research is that librarians generally do not publish their research" (p. 69).

When thinking of dissemination, keep three things in mind: ease of comprehension, ease of access, and multiple forums. Strive for accessible language and format, and consider publishing in an open access journal so that the information is freely available to your colleagues. In terms of multiple forums, there are several venues to consider when thinking about getting the word out.

First up is publishing. Why might you want to publish your own work on your own practice? An important reason is to increase the evidence base. In order to practice EBL, we need to have the knowledge base. And that means publishing research activities in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Eldredge (2006) contends that we as a profession have "an obligation to ensure that results are communicated, even if these results are not dramatic or new, to build a more solid foundation to our knowledge base" (351). But publishing in scholarly journals is not the only way to get the word out. Publishing online on blogs, wikis, and personal or professional websites, just to name a few online avenues, also serves to get the message out.

Another way to disseminate your message is by educational or professional development means. Present a paper or take part in a poster session at a conference. Run a workshop, session, or webinar based on the topic of your research. Present your findings at a journal

club, discussion, group, or any other gathering in a professional setting.

The research that librarians undertake to inform their practice can be integrated into library management and policy in a few ways. Making sure that the ultimate decision-makers in the organization are aware of the research activities, or conversely, aware of a lack of evidence for certain issues, can prompt administrators to go forward with an evidence based approach. Presenting evidence either self-generated or found in the literature at library meetings or other internal venues can be the spark needed to push new ideas forward, and can contribute to an evidence based culture shift within the organization.

And finally, personal communication is an excellent way to get the word out about your results and to share what you have found with colleagues. Listservs and email work, as do social networking tools such Facebook, Twitter, wikis, and blogs. Chapter 12 in *Evidence-Based Practice for Information Professionals: A Handbook* by Crumley and Koufogiannakis, fleshes out all of these examples and is a must-read if you are thinking of getting the results from the evidence based process out there.

It is difficult to practice in a vacuum. And in evidence based library and information practice, just as we need to reach out to find the evidence, so does everyone else who is endeavouring to practice in that way. There needs to be evidence in the evidence base. I believe it is safe to assume that because you

had a question you needed to explore, others have or will have the same question. EBLIP is a way to work collaboratively without even meeting face to face. Sharing the evidence; making it available to inform practice, helps everyone in librarianship.

Now that I have finished taking you through the steps of EBL, next time I will embark on a new and exciting adventure in *EBL 101*. I will be looking at various research methods, qualitative and quantitative, and will be giving overviews of the methods including types of research studies for which they would be appropriate. First up, an overview of qualitative and quantitative research.

References

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