



Editorial

Looking Forwards and Looking Back

Alison Brettle

Editor-in-Chief

Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, University of Salford
Salford, United Kingdom

Email: a.brettle@salford.ac.uk

© 2012 Brettle. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 2.5 Canada (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

Welcome to the seventh volume of *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*. This is my first issue in my new role of Editor-in-Chief, and I'm honoured and delighted to take over the position. As many of you may know, I've been involved with the journal almost since its inception, primarily as Associate Editor (Articles). During that time, I've sincerely enjoyed working with the supportive *EBLIP* team, as well as many authors throughout the world, and I'm looking forward to continuing that work in my new role.

Spring is traditionally a time of new growth and change, and the *EBLIP* journal is no different. In the last issue, Denise Koufogiannakis reflected on how the journal had grown and developed during its first 6 years, and I look forward to contributing to its continued success. There have been a number of changes in the editorial team. I welcome Wayne Jones from Carleton University, Canada, who has taken over as Associate Editor (Articles) and brings a wealth of editorial experience. Heather Pretty has taken over as lead copyeditor and is joining our

editorial meetings to help ensure the continued quality and consistency of the journal. As part of quality assurance and development, the editorial team is examining and revising our journal guidelines, so look for those in forthcoming months. Our former Editor-in-Chief, Denise Koufogiannakis, is developing a new role as Associate Editor (Reviews). As a keen advocate of reviews for providing evidence, developing skills for research and evidence based practice, and documenting and establishing an evidence base for our profession, I'm looking forward to the first review which is likely to be published in the next issue. Too much change can be disruptive, so I'm pleased that both Lorie Kloda and Jonathan Eldredge are maintaining their positions as Associate Editors for Evidence Summaries and Classics, respectively.

When starting something new, it is often useful to look back (to build on experience or make sure we don't make the same mistakes!). When I looked back on my own evidence based library and information practice journey, I realized it began in the mid 1990's, certainly before I was even aware that the phrase had

been coined. I've never worked in a library, and my first professional post was as an information specialist within a research unit that supported evidence based health care. I knew little about research and even less about evidence based practice, I clung to the hope that I knew something about being an information professional! A long time academic, my manager championed library and information professionals believing they had a key role to play in the evidence based practice movement – whether by finding information, developing information products, or helping others to find information for practice. Furthermore, he encouraged me to examine my own practice, and when there were no answers to some of the problems we came across, to research, evaluate, and write about it. This encouragement resulted in my first forays into being an evidence based library and information practitioner (Brettle, Long, Grant, & Greenhalgh, 1998; Brettle & Long, 2001). I challenge you to do the same; you never know where it may lead.

Much of the debate about Evidence Based Library and Information Practice has been about its name (e.g., Booth, 2003), its definition (e.g., Booth, 2003), the evidence (e.g., Crumley and Koufogiannakis, 2003 and Eldredge, 2004), and most recently, whether it has a future or whether we should all retire (Booth, 2011). For me, EBLIP is not about the name; it is about what we do, how we behave, and how the library and information profession can have a continued future. (And in case you're wondering, I'm not about to retire). Our professional roles are all about evidence (in its various forms). The contexts in which we work are changing, but as a profession we have skills that make us good at dealing with research, information, knowledge, or evidence (for example, organizing, writing, or searching). It therefore makes sense that we build evidence based approaches into our working lives. We can use these approaches to transfer our knowledge to different contexts and demonstrate our value and worth to employers. This may take various forms – critically reading a paper to get new ideas, seeking out like minded colleagues to discuss their approach to a problem, evaluating a

service or testing alternative approaches so that we work in the most effective and efficient way, and so on.

The purpose of the journal is to “provide a forum for librarians and other information professionals to discover research that may contribute to decision making in professional practice.” It does this in a number of ways which I hope encourage you, our readers, to incorporate evidence based approaches into your working lives. Evidence summaries seek to provide practitioners with a user friendly overview of research that they can use in their decision making, articles focus on generating EBLIP related research, the Using Evidence in Practice section focuses on the practical use of evidence, and finally, the commentaries provide a forum for debate. Over the past 6 years I have watched and contributed to the journal's development and seen its impact on professional practice. I look forward to contributing to its future and hope that you will continue to give it your support.

References

- Booth, A. (2003). Bridging the research-practice gap? The role of evidence based librarianship. *New Review of Information & Library Research*, 9(1), 3-23. doi:10.1080/13614550410001687909
- Booth, A. (2011) Is there a future for evidence based library and information practice? *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 6(4), 22-27.
- Brettle, A. J., & Long, A. F. (2001). Comparison of bibliographic databases for information on the rehabilitation of people with severe mental illness. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 89(4), 353-362.
- Brettle, A. J., Long, A. F., Grant, M. J., & Greenhalgh, J. (1998). Searching for information on outcomes: do you need to be comprehensive? *Quality in Health Care*, 7(3), 163-167.

Crumley, E., & Koufogiannakis, D. (2002).
Developing evidence-based
librarianship: practical steps for
implementation. *Health Information &
Libraries Journal*, 19(2), 61.
doi:10.1046/j.1471-1842.2002.00372.x

Eldredge, J. D. (2004). Inventory of research
methods for librarianship and
informatics. *Journal of the Medical
Library Association*, 92(1), 83-90.