

Title: Implementing EBLIP to stimulate professional development

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Most librarians presented with the concept of evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP) are positive and easily convinced of the benefits to the profession. When looking into the task of implementing EBLIP in your own library it is easy to feel overwhelmed, and that the work process will be too time consuming. This paper will present two approaches to using EBLIP to stimulate professional (scholarly) development, involving:

- the development of the critical appraisal skills of the library staff
- the production and publication of evidence.

For the development of the critical appraisal of evidence, we have been holding a journal club since October 2004. The club started as a less structured meeting but has since autumn 2006 developed into a more stringent and objective critical appraisal exercise including the use of a CRiSTAL checklist. On the side of the production and publication of evidence, we have run two projects. Firstly, a qualitative research project using the method of “participant observation” to investigate the information searching behaviour and IT support needs of younger researchers; based on the insight that more local knowledge is needed about their actual everyday information behaviour when using the electronic library or other resources. Secondly, we have attempted to use collaborative writing in the production of an article on library educational development with a view to make the writing process easier and more effective and spread knowledge about the project amongst the staff.

The outcomes from these two approaches are promising. Awareness about LIS research, about qualitative research methodology and the scholarly awareness have increased markedly amongst the library staff by using the EBLIP approach. We are also seeing indications of the effect of these efforts on various library activities, i.e. team discussions and user education. Library staff also shows more interest in reading the published literature and publishing themselves. These approaches have shown the potential of in-house professional development activities as way to learn new skills, possibly more cost effective compared to conferences or courses, and easier to tailor to local needs.

To be able to develop the services of the library to better suit the academic setting of the future, one strategy is to develop knowledge about research methodology and design, and the scholarly work of researchers. Using the approaches described above is helping to open windows into the research world.