Moving forward: defining and conceptualising evidence based practice for the library and information profession

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Does evidence based library and information practice really exist?

What is evidence in LIS practice?

Not all evidence is equal

"most research evidence from the LIS field occupies the lowest levels of evidence" and the LIS profession should be encouraged to "use more rigorous forms over less rigorous forms of evidence when making decisions" (Eldredge, 2002)

There are some things we can learn from medicine but in education we know we have a much tougher job interpreting and applying evidence in practice. Teachers and lecturers aren’t dealing with just one patient at a time but with large groups of students who affect each others’ learning – all with different needs and all at the same time. Researchers have the luxury of freezing the frame and looking at particular parts of this mix. Teachers have to interact with it all dynamically and quickly. So research evidence is only one kind of knowledge and it has to be integrated with our own, equally important, practical skills and knowledge. (BERF Bulletin, 2004)
Model of Human Action (adapted from Butler)

Five Steps (Eldredge, 2006)

1. Formulate a clearly-defined, relevant and answerable question
2. Search for an answer in both the published and unpublished literature plus any other authoritative resources, for the best available evidence
3. Critically appraise the evidence
4. Assess the relative value of expected benefits and costs of any decided upon action plan
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the action plan

If we are really going to be an evidence based profession than....

We need to define and conceptualise evidence base practice for LIS.

To do this we need to start building the evidence for evidence based practice in LIS.

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