

Using the Steps of Evidence-Based Practice to Target a Medical Science Library's Instructional Practices for Local Professional Health Programs Curricula

Micah J Waltz*

Heather K. Moberly**

Catherine Pepper***

Rachel Blume****

Sheila Green*****

Christina Seeger*****

Stephanie Fulton*****

Abstract

Introduction

This research continues to explore how information skills and behaviors are embedded in program-level curricular documents from five professional health programs at one university, including a veterinary curriculum. The programs' accrediting bodies criteria for information skills and behaviors were compared with the programs' curricula. These data are framed within the steps of evidence-based practice (EBP) to develop a targeted data-driven instructional vision that supports each population and their diverse instructional needs and student bodies.

Methods

Building on a rubric developed in an earlier phase of this project and published in 2020, each curricular outcome from all five local professional health programs was qualitatively coded using an inductive approach. This coding provided a way to frame the intents of an outcome. The primary intent of each curricular outcome was based on identifying and analyzing the action verbs of each individual curricular outcome. The mission statements and outcomes for the accrediting bodies for each of the five local professional health programs were also coded

* Texas A&M University, USA, mwaltz@tamu.edu

** Texas A&M University, USA, hmoberly@library.tamu.edu

*** Texas A&M University, USA, cpepper@library.tamu.edu

**** Texas A&M University, USA, rachel.blume@library.tamu.edu

***** Texas A&M University, USA, sgreen@library.tamu.edu

***** Texas A&M University, USA, seeger@library.tamu.edu

***** Texas A&M University, USA, s-fulton@library.tamu.edu

using the same rubric and categories. This coding was used to identify how information seeking behaviors and skills are incorporated. The data from both the local programs' curricula and their accrediting bodies were mapped to the steps of EBP to create a framework. This approach grounds the instructional support within the accrediting bodies and curricula, and emphasizes EBP.

Results

Some programs had curricular outcomes with explicit mention of information skills and behaviors. All five programs had outcomes that implied these outcomes, such as competencies about lifelong learning. A noticeable emphasis on evaluating information was discerned within the curricular outcomes. This emphasis on evaluating information across the local curricula highlights an emphasis on EBP among the health curricula. Mapping the local programs' curricular competencies to EBP underscores the need for health librarians to develop and provide contextualized instruction about accessing, identifying, and evaluating information necessary for using evidence to inform decisions. Further research could map individual course objectives to EBP competencies to evaluate whether curricular outcomes are actualized.

Discussion

The program-level curricular documents contain valuable data about how information skills and behaviors are incorporated in the local health professional curricula. A common emphasis among the local health professional curricula is the ability to "evaluate" information. Mapping the local curricula, and their accrediting bodies, to the steps of EBP provides a framework for contextualizing instructional support of the information skills and behaviors and identifies opportunities for librarians to support instruction.

Conclusion

The need for instruction about information skills and behaviors is embedded within program curricular documents. By identifying this information, librarians can provide more tailored instructional support to their populations about acquiring, identifying, and evaluating information. This also creates the space for librarians to advocate emphasizing instruction to programs' curriculum committees about the second and third steps of EBP, "Acquire the Evidence" and "critically appraising information."

Keywords: Instruction, Evidence-Based Practice, Curricula, Data Mining

Bibliography

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