Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

Research Article

What Do Australian Library and Information Professionals Experience as Evidence?

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Abstract

Objective – This article presents the findings of a project which established an empirical basis for evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP). More specifically, the paper explores what library and information professionals experienced as evidence in the context of their professional practice.

Methods – The project consisted of two sub-studies. The public library sub-study was conducted using ethnography. Over a 5-month period, a member of the research team travelled to a regional public library on 15 occasions, staying between 3 and 4 days on each visit. The researcher observed, interacted, and became involved in the day-to-day activities of this library. These activities were recorded in a journal and added to the researcher's insights and thoughts. Additionally, 13 face-to-face interviews with staff in positions ranging from the operational to the executive were conducted. The academic sub-study was conducted using Constructivist Grounded Theory. Semi-structured interviews were conducted either in person or via Skype, with 13 librarians from Australian universities. Interviewees were in a diverse array of roles, from liaison librarian to manager and library director.

Results – The project found that the Australian academic librarians and the public librarians who participated in the project experienced six elements as evidence: observation, feedback, professional colleagues, research literature, statistics, and intuition. Each of these will be described and highlighted with examples from each of the two studies.

Conclusions – The findings of this study revealed many similarities in the way that library professionals from both studies experienced evidence. Evidence was not hierarchical, with evidence from many sources being valued equally. In contextualizing evidence and applying to the local environment, library professionals were able to draw upon more than one source of evidence and apply their professional knowledge and experiences. In this way evidence was more nuanced.

Introduction

This article presents findings from a three-year project, which explored the ways in which Australian LIS professionals experience evidence based practice (EBP). Two interconnected sub-studies provided an empirical basis for EBP in the context of the Australian library and information profession: 1) academic librarians' experience of EBP, using constructivist grounded theory methodology and 2) public librarians' experience of EBP, using ethnographic methods. The two contrasting qualitative research approaches

enabled the facilitation of deeper insights into *how* LIS professionals can experience EBP and also *what* they experienced as evidence. The concept of "evidence" in the EBLIP context is seldom interrogated. Research evidence does not always provide the necessary guidance to make decisions in professional practice, yet it takes "front and centre" position in EBLIP discourse. This article specifically focuses on comparing the findings on what was experienced as evidence across the two sub-studies to describe what constitutes these forms

of evidence in the context of librarians' professional practice. To contextualize what LIS professionals experience as evidence, a review of the literature outlines the current state of research into the various sources of evidence used for evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP), followed by an overview of the two sub-studies' methodological approaches and findings.

Literature Review

Over the past 15 years, since an initial re-modeling of the decision-making framework from its medical origins, what constitutes as "evidence" in evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP) has been debated in the literature. From the first EBLIP framework proposed by Eldredge (2000), "published research" has taken centre stage and often times continues to be assumed as the only type of evidence in EBLIP discourse (Koufogiannakis, 2013, p. 8).

An early definition of EBLIP from Booth (2002) builds on Eldredge's (2000) framework and identifies sources of evidence other than research to inform improvements to practice or "professional judgments" (2002, p 53).

> Evidence-based librarianship is an approach to information science that promotes the collection, interpretation and integration of valid, important and applicable user-reported, librarian observed, and research derived evidence. The best available evidence, moderated by user needs and preferences, is applied to improve the quality of professional judgments (Booth, 2002, p. 53).

Yet despite these additional sources of evidence included in Booth's (2002) definition, Koufogiannakis (2011, p. 42) highlights the ongoing omission of "user-reported" and "librarian-observed" sources in the EBLIP literature. Koufogiannakis (2011, p. 53) uses a practice based perspective to identify local information and professional knowledge as other evidence to consider in practice, forming a more "realistic view" of evidence. Similarly, Todd (2009, p. 89) categorizes research evidence as "evidence for practice," one of three dimensions of evidence in a "holistic," conceptual approach to looking at evidence used in professional practice. Two other dimensions of evidence, evidence in practice and evidence of practice, are identified in Todd's (2009) model. User-reported evidence and results of evaluation programs are examples of "evidence of practice" (Todd, 2009, p. 89).

This aligns with "local evidence" sources as described by Koufogiannakis (2011, p. 50) to include usage data, feedback, and librarian observation. According to Koufogiannakis (2011), local evidence is directly applicable as it is concerned with addressing the needs of the users of the library or information service. Koufogiannakis (2011, p. 42, 44) argues for these additional types and sources of evidence to be considered equally with research evidence and says that they are not any less worthy, but simply different.

An understanding of "evidence" in EBLIP is evolving, both from acknowledgements of different types and sources of evidence in the literature, as well as findings from empirical studies seeking to identify evidence in organizational contexts (Gillespie, 2014; Koufogiannakis, 2012; Partridge, Edwards & Thorpe (2010). Research evidence is found to not be the only type of evidence to inform practice (Koufogiannakis, 2012, p.18). Koufogiannakis (2012, p. 10) grouped sources of evidence used by academic librarians into two types – hard and soft evidence. "Hard" evidence has "concrete" information attached to it and types include published literature, statistics from the particular product or service, and local evaluation (Koufogiannakis, 2012, p. 11). "Soft" evidence focuses on "the story of how things fit together in context" and includes input from colleagues, feedback, and tacit knowledge

(Koufogiannakis, 2012, p. 11). Koufogiannakis (2012, p. 10) found that practitioners were unsure of what constituted evidence; there is some hesitation as to the relevance and quality of research evidence. But regardless of the source, they were willing to consider whatever may inform decision-making (Koufogiannakis, 2012, p. 10). This study confirms that research evidence alone is not enough to inform professional practice.

With a range of evidence sources identified by library and information professionals, Koufogiannakis (2012, p. 9) found evidence that use in practice is dependent on the situation and type of problem being faced. A pilot study by Partridge, Edwards, and Thorpe (2010) is the first Australian study to explore variations in experiences of EBLIP by a cross-sector group of library and information professionals. Participants described their experiences of the role of evidence in their daily practice. For example, an experience of evidence based practice "as service improvement," where the professional's focus is on best practice, looking at, and benchmarking against other library and information services, is undertaken (Partridge, Edwards, Thorpe (2010, p. 286). The range of evidence identified in participants' experiences with evidence based practice was associated with its use and "submission" as part of decision-making processes and culture within their organizations (Partridge et al., 2010, p. 291). Evidence used by Australian library and information professionals in Partridge et al. (2010) included research literature, as well as surveys, organizational strategy, and feedback, which is consistent with the sources of evidence advocated by Koufogiannakis (2011; Thorpe, Partridge and Edwards, 2008). Findings of this study suggest that identifying types or sources of evidence and assigning its value is influenced by the situation and how the evidence is used in making decisions. Koufogiannakis (2013, p. 9) argues that evidence identified and used in practice cannot be prescriptive, and must consider local context and circumstances; that the role of EBLIP is about using evidence and

figuring out what is best for the situation or problem.

This then poses the question of what is "best available" evidence, the determination of which Booth (2002) and Koufogiannakis (2011) say only the library and information professional can do through appraisal and assigning value to evidence pertinent to making decisions in a given situation or context. Within a professional practice setting, day-to-day realities can influence how evidence is encountered, gathered, and used. For example, influential stakeholders of an organization, such as a CEO, were found to determine the types of evidence gathered for a decision or task in a study which explored evidence based practice of special librarians (Howlett and Howard, 2015). Further to this, Koufogiannakis (2013) found that who owns the decision – the individual librarian or a group within an academic library – has an impact on how evidence is used, either for confirming a decision or to influence or convince. While similarities exist across library and information practice, empirical findings suggest variations in what is "best available." Understanding these variations will better position the existing EBLIP model to achieve its aims in making effective "value added" decisions in the provision of library and information services.

The Research Project

The three-year project commenced in 2013 and included two interconnected sub-studies. Sub-study one explored academic librarians' experience of evidence based practice (Miller, Partridge, Bruce, Yates, & Howlett, submitted). Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) was the research approach employed. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with thirteen academic librarians recruited from Australian universities. Participants were recruited via a purposive sampling approach. Participants were identified through publicly available information about staffing and organizational structures that is

provided on University library websites. Participants were approached via email inviting them to take part in the study. Participants were identified to ensure variation in key aspects such as roles (e.g., liaison, reference and information librarians, library executives, team managers, and directors) and University. Interview questions were designed to allow participants to describe their experiences of evidence based practice. In keeping with the grounded theory approach, there was one primary interview question: *Can you tell me about your experience of using evidence in your professional practice?* In addition, a range of follow-up questions was also used to probe or elicit further information from participants about responses they provided.

Data collection and analysis was undertaken simultaneously, with "each informing and focusing the other" (Charmaz, 2006). This is a key element of grounded theory. Typically, data is collected initially from a small pool of participants. This data is analyzed and the results inform the direction of further data collection, including sampling strategies. The researcher returns to the field continually until theoretical saturation is achieved. The findings from this sub-study provide a holistic view of academic librarians' experience of evidence based practice. Six categories of experience were constructed, which described librarians' experiences of evidence based practice as: empowering, intuiting, affirming, connecting, noticing, and impacting. Each category was identified through analysis of responses from more than one participant. It is beyond the scope of the current paper to give a detailed discussion of each category. Further details regarding the sub-study's findings are presented in Miller et al. (submitted).

Sub-study two explored how evidence based practice was experienced in one Australian public library. Ethnography was the research approach employed (Fetterman, 1998). Summertown Library is the site for this investigation. Summertown is a pseudonym

used to protect the identities of the participants. The same pseudonyms have consistently been used in other articles reporting on this project (Gillespie, Partridge, Bruce & Howlett, 2016). The Summertown Library is a service provided by the Summertown City Council, which serves a large provincial town of over 180,000 residents. Three branches are strategically located, with another branch planned in the near future to cater for the growing spread of the population. Summertown is a coastal town that has a port and is the service centre for outlying mining and industrial industries. In more recent times it has become a site for migrant and refugee families.

One member of the research team travelled to Summertown 15 times over a 6 month period. Each visit was of 3 to 4 days. Initial visits took a "big net" approach where the researcher was immersed in as many activities in the library as possible (e.g., shelving, assisting customers on the floor, culling, storytelling, assisting in the mobile van, and offering assistance wherever possible). At day's end the researcher recorded the events in a journal. Included were unobtrusive observations, comments, interactions with staff, and attempts to interpret what the researcher was seeing. In addition, thirteen participants from within the library staff, representing diversity in the operational units and management levels, were interviewed. Additionally, the researcher collected a range of print materials, including promotional leaflets of library activities, strategic plan and related timelines, planning pro forma, and feedback forms.

Ethnographic data analysis is iterative "as it builds on ideas throughout the study" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 92). Analysis is a refinement of the data with the researcher trying to fit selections of the data into the bigger picture; in this case, experiences of evidence based practice. The researcher's reflections and interpretations, observations, interactions, and field notes provided the data for the current study. In keeping with the ethnographic approach, the

findings are presented as a thematic narrative. Evidence based practice is experienced in Summertown Public Library through four interconnected and interdependent cultural orientations: valuing, being, learning, and leading. It is beyond the scope of the current paper to give a detailed discussion of each cultural orientation. Further details regarding the sub-study's findings are presented in Gillespie et al. (2016).

In both sub-studies, data collection was designed to allow the participants to reveal their own experiences and understanding of evidence based practice and evidence. The research team did not impose a pre-determined definition or understanding of these concepts. This approach was in keeping with the two research methods employed and with the overarching aim of the project, which was to build an empirical basis for evidence based practice grounded in the lived experiences and realities of library and information science practitioners.

What is Evidence?

In both studies, observations, feedback, professional colleagues, research literature, statistics, and intuition were recognized as evidence. Each of these will be described and highlighted with examples from each of the studies.

Observations as Evidence

Observations as evidence could be deliberate and controlled or unexpected and serendipitous. Observation was recognized by Tracy, a public librarian, "as a very powerful tool." It can raise awareness of clients' behaviours, demographics, and usage patterns, confirm professional judgment, and expose information concerning continual improvement of services and resources that may not be available from statistical data sources.

In the public library sub-study, especially among operational staff, observation was

generally unexpected and not controlled. The observations were generally not recorded as they were seen, but they were often reported or passed on in conversation informally and in more formal meeting and planning situations. In the example which follows, observation served to raise awareness guiding Taya, who was leading Children's Storytime, to seek supporting evidence. Taya relates her observations of participation and attendance at Storytime sessions:

> We saw that our audiences for the mentoring and Storytime sessions were increasing. And we were having a lot more multicultural people come to Storytime.

Taya observed that many of the families attending Storytime were from diverse cultural backgrounds. At the end of sessions the families are asked to complete feedback forms. These provide some useful information, but the forms do not ask demographic questions. The growing cultural mix of families attending Storytime could only be gathered from observations.

Similarly, in the academic library study, observations of client or staff behaviours and usage patterns were experienced as forms of evidence, as one academic librarian described:

> . . . that's why I really love getting out and working on the desk for a couple of hours every day or going into classes and . . . teaching because you still pick up on ways to improve or identify . . . similar problems that the students are having maybe on a website or with searching or . . . just understanding their behaviours in regards to finding information as well. (Participant 1).

For academic librarians in this study, observational evidence can be gained informally, such as in the above example, or from formal web data analytics observed during a daily task, for example:

. . . I've got a library guide, which is all about how to reference in APA style . . . and I was looking at the statistics for that site 'cause I really want to know how many students are actually accessing it. And it is one of the most popular library guides that we do have . . . what I found interesting was that the most used page within that guide itself was how to reference a website, not how to reference a journal article or a book from the library . . . . So that gives . . . evidence to me that . . . although we really try to focus our . . . sessions on using library resources . . . the students are still using websites . . . and wanting to reference them (Participant 1).

In contrast, examples of observations by executive and management levels were more deliberate, although these too were unrecorded. For example, Tonya, as Executive Manager of the public library, spends time on the library floor every week with the purpose of seeing first-hand what is happening in the library and getting a "feel" of work flows and responses from the staff as they interact with customer requests. When she is on the floor, customers do not realize that she is the executive manager, and Tonya does not respond to them in that way either. She responds as any of the operational level library staff would do. In this way, she is deliberately observing staff interactions, work flows, customer concerns, and activities. This observational evidence keeps Tonya in touch with the day-to-day library activities.

Feedback as Evidence

Similar to observational evidence, feedback could be formally or deliberately sought, or could come from incidental encounters. The collection and analysis of data from customer satisfaction surveys was systematically carried out by the Summertown Council on a regular basis. Additionally, customers were asked to fill in feedback forms after being involved in activities. Mostly responses were positive, with

"more of this" being quite common. The collated data of customer feedback forms, in conjunction with the customer satisfaction surveys, provided an overall picture of customer satisfaction. The results presented a positive image for the library and its operations; however, the customer feedback forms are a requirement of the council and are generic in nature. There were concerns among library managers that this type of evidence does not indicate level of impact, or provide information which might assist in future planning.

Examples of evidence gained from incidental feedback were in the form of emails and in face-to-face encounters. Betty explained, "Quite often we will have a thank you . . . 90% of the time you'll get positive feedback." Maggie valued incidental customer feedback in this comment, " . . . someone comes up to you or a few people come up to you after and say, wow, that was really good."

For academic librarians, evidence is the corroboration of supportive feedback received and shared by colleagues, clients, and institutions, as illustrated in the following quote from an academic librarian:

I think I'm performing . . . effectively when my colleagues give me positive feedback . . . . I think managers can give you . . . lots of positive reinforcement about where you're going . . . . I think it's that 360 thing . . . you get it from all directions (Participant 8).

Similarly, for public librarians, this valuing was witnessed through the ways skills and achievements of staff were acknowledged and shared. Open acknowledgments shared face-to-face and among staff was affirmative evidence. Examples of feedback included shared responses and incidents, usually a firsthand encounter and emails, relating to customer reactions, events staff had attended, and feedback of a more general nature. Affirmative evidence as part of conversation was an ongoing

and everyday occurrence among all levels of staff.

Other examples of feedback as evidence were in relation to workplace performance. This feedback could be face-to-face in meetings between staff and their supervisors. Maggie valued this type of feedback.

> . . . my supervisor is very good . . .
> if I'm doing a good job she'll tell me
> I'm doing a good job . . . that just
> prompts me to do better, you know.

It was during the interview with Xavier, that he reflected that anecdotes gathered in face-to-face encounters with customers could provide valuable feedback. Awareness among staff about the value of this feedback and the need to document the anecdote would move the evidence from being an unexpected encounter to a strategic approach in capturing this type of evidence.

For academic librarians, feedback is collected through listening and questioning, which can be used to enhance or change services and/or practice, as the following quote from a liaison librarian explains:

> I might be . . . walking along a corridor,
> and an academic will actually . . . come
> out of their office . . . "Thanks . . . I like . .
> . the library . . . what service they're
> offering, or what you did in that class
> the other day," . . . whereas the formal
> feedback might be they'll send me an
> email after class to say . . . "We hope you
> can continue doing . . . joint classes," . . .
> it's good to seek it out and get that
> formal, and sometimes you don't need
> to, they'll just tell you informally, which
> is great as well. I think I like that one
> better . . . . And if I haven't explained it
> well, I can tell. They'll ask me the same
> kind of questions again, or if I'm on the
> right track they might ask me . . . a more
> advanced question that . . . continues the

conversation . . . you're sort of using that feedback . . . you're using that as evidence (Participant 3).

Professional Colleagues as Evidence

Interactions with professional (industry or university librarian) colleagues at conferences are experienced by academic librarians as evidence. These interactions include sharing experiences and informal networking with librarian colleagues from other universities and institutions to experiment and gather new ideas to implement within their own library.

> . . . attending conferences . . . events and
> webinars, and those types of things,
> where librarians from outside of my
> workplace are sharing their experiences,
> or their achievements, or projects
> they've worked on, getting a chance to
> see what everyone else is doing and
> then picking up on, "That's what I'm
> doing," or, "That's something that I
> want to do" (Participant 1).

Additionally, they are sharing and collecting resources with other universities to demonstrate improved processes. They are also collaborating with outside subject experts to improve selection quality and learning resources. Academic librarians also benefit from professional colleagues as evidence for benchmarking across similar libraries with good practice models to inform planning their own library.

Sharing and collecting ideas from other libraries was also evident in the public library sub-study. Flora, the manager of Collection Development, was able to investigate and later implement innovative ways of displaying and arranging the non-fiction collection. She consulted with professional colleagues and visited other public libraries. In gaining first-hand evidence from outside sources, Flora was able to report to management to plan and implement changes.

Research Literature as Evidence

Academic librarians are maintaining awareness of professional literature to evaluate specific library activities and make decisions in terms of industry standards and best practice, where applicable. They also maintain awareness of scholarly literature to increase credibility of evidence presented and service contribution to university contexts.

> . . . individual librarians have . . . done literature searches. In terms of just reviewing particular services, we have done literature reviews just to see what evidence is out there for best practice (Participant 5).

Using scholarly literature did not feature strongly in the interviews in the public library sub-study. However, from incidental conversations with staff, the literature influenced and informed before decisions were made. Cailey, from the Children's Services section of the library, related an incident where floor staff were wishing to remove the book spinners used to display books in the junior and teenage areas. The book spinners were considered to be difficult to keep tidy and to relocate books when needed. Cailey was able to bring to a management meeting literature which supported the use of book spinners, especially for junior and teenage customers. Due to bringing these insights, the book spinners stayed. Additionally, they were moved to more prominent positons in the children's and teens' areas of the library.

Statistics as Evidence

The Summertown Libraries and their council collected and collated many statistics. For instance, the library collected circulation and membership statistics generated from the library management system; visitor numbers were an indication of traffic in the different libraries and customer participation data demonstrated how many attended the different activities that were offered. The council quantified and plotted customer satisfaction surveys. This data was useful for accountability, to plot trends over time, to indicate workload such as periods and areas of high use, and likewise, underutilization.

Flora, the Collection Development Manager, considered that statistics were vital in her role. Statistical data was used for budgets and user requests, and identified areas of high demand. The collection of data from user statistics revealed a need to extend the inter-library loan scheme. Data generated from the library management system assisted staff in culling the collection, as well as identifying gaps and future purchases. The data was interrogated and selected to gain specific information for the long term management of the collection.

Tonya, the Executive Manager, termed much of the data that was collected as *lag data;* that is, this type of data was evidence of past events. It was considered useful, but of limited value in the big picture of the library. Tonya felt that she needed a bigger picture of the community landscape, and the statistical data being collected did not provide these insights. The library was able to provide many services of the type that are generally associated with the role of libraries, but she considered that there was much that could be specifically designed to meet the needs of the local population. Tonya began by actively seeking statistical data as evidence from within the council. This type of data included demographic information such as age and ethnicity, population density, population growth, locations of growing, and changing population. Additionally, from sources further afield, she sought data and indications of trends such as community needs in a changing economic environment.

Academic librarians in this study are adept at "keeping an eye on" usage patterns from statistical data, but they are uncertain about how to use this evidence once identified. One of the main experiences reported by librarians is the perception that, while more challenging to

capture "mental notes" for future use, qualitative data gathered from informal conversational feedback were more insightful and useful for decision making than quantitative data gathered from client surveys or databases where only numbers of interactions have been recorded (Participant 3).

Intuition as Evidence

For academic librarians, intuition, encompassing wisdom and understanding of library staff/clients' behaviours, is being used as evidence to solve problems and redesign library services. As the following senior level academic librarian expressed in relation to using her intuitive understanding of staff under her supervision:

> I've learnt to trust my gut, and … I've learnt not to be scared to invite someone into the office and say "are you alright?" (Participant 11).

Another librarian who teaches information literacy classes described the intuitive evidence of knowing she is teaching effectively as:

> . . . sometimes it's more of a perception or an intuition you know when you're teaching a class and you can see the students . . . the light go on in their eyes . . . . Many times you can just visually see it . . . you know they've understood and they've comprehended . . . (Participant 9).

Nadia, the team leader of the Summertown Library's Customer Service section, considered that gaining understandings of many aspects of the organization and the people who worked within it helped to build a picture about what is happening; that intuition is something that is built over time using a variety of sources to come to conclusions: " . . . a lot of what you do is still gut instinct."

Nadia draws on her professional knowledge as an experienced team leader and her professional experiences from working in the organization. These guide her intuition, which in turn guides her actions. This can be explained as there being two parts to the practitioner's expression of the term "intuition"; that is, professional experience and professional knowledge, and there is a nuanced difference between these two concepts. When evidence from whatever source is presented, the practitioner looks at this and makes a judgment based on professional and past experiences. This action relies on professional experience. When the practitioner questions and seeks further evidence in different or better ways, in order to gain more information, or to confirm or deny the evidence, professional knowledge comes into play. Nadia explained it in this way:

> In that in terms of evidence, don't just rely on, on what you're being told or how you're being trained because at the end of the day, we are a government organization and we are trained a certain way. You've got to think outside the box.

Professional knowledge is a measured and thoughtful response to the evidence; the practitioner is defining the purpose of the evidence, considering ways to explore it further, and drawing upon professional knowledge.

Evidence in Context

This study has revealed that professionals in both the public library and academic library shared similar views about what they considered to be evidence. The similarities bring attention to and emphasize the many different types of evidence that inform and confirm everyday practice. However, there were some differences. These were related to the way in which the studies gathered, analyzed, and presented the data, rather than the perceptions of evidence from each group. The grounded theory academic library study provided many

contexts, with each interview coming from a different library setting, but the revelations from these interviews were limited to how much the participants were willing to share; there were no first hand observations from the researcher. In contrast, the ethnographic public library study revealed much contextual data from one library setting. The first hand observations and insights of the researcher provided many examples of library professionals' experiences of evidence based practice, providing data of a more nuanced nature and rich contextual information which face-to-face interviews on their own may not provide.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that what is experienced as evidence by academic and public library professionals is similar in many ways. In both studies, evidence based practice was a lived experience. Observations, feedback, professional colleagues, research literature, statistics, and intuition were recognized as evidence. However, many of these types of evidence were used in conjunction with each other as a means to support or confirm. All evidence types were treated equally by the participants and there was not a hierarchical structure of evidence types. Library professionals drew upon their professional knowledge and experiences to draw conclusions from the various types of evidence. This nuanced approach of contextualizing evidence, drawing from many sources and applying it to the local environment, demonstrates an experiential engagement with evidence based practice.

This is in contrast to early writing on evidence based practice in librarianship as expressed by Brice and Hill (2004), where evidence from the research literature was held in the highest regard, with less recognition of the practitioner observed and user reported evidence types. This study serves to explain and elaborate in practice based terms the early EBLIP definition provided by Booth (2002). Previously, evidence based practice as an experience had been explored by

Gillespie (2014), Koufogiannakis (2013), and Partridge et al. (2010). This study adds to this growing empirial base; it highlights that there is no one way to be an evidence based practitioner and that many sources of evidence are utilized by library professionals to guide and inform practice and in decision making.

This study has provided many insights about the nature of evidence among library professionals in academic and public library contexts. The examples in this paper provide lived experiences of library professionals gathering and using many sources of evidence in their everyday work environments.

Acknowledgements

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