



Editorial

Defending Evidence Based Practice

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My head is still buzzing from the EBLIP4 conference. Meeting people face-to-face with whom I have worked exclusively online was delightful, as was getting to know many people whose work I have been reading for the past few years. It was both gratifying and humbling to see that this journal is so well received and useful in informing practice. While the journal's scope, standards and content were, for the most part, positively viewed, the editorial board (and the EBLIP movement in general) was challenged on a few occasions. To summarize, some inquired how it could be said that EBLIP is any different from good research, and questioned how it is that previous publications are being pushed aside in favour of the EBLIP journal. My initial reaction was to be defensive. Upon reflection, however, I am grateful for those who are stirring the pot, so to speak, and

encouraging us to evaluate why and how we may be making a difference.

Is EBLIP different from good, sound research? This is difficult to answer since both concepts are not mutually exclusive. Good research is an integral component of EBLIP; without it, EBLIP could not exist (neither would this journal exist and many of us would not be trying to figure out how to get to EBLIP5 in Sweden in 2009!). EBLIP goes a few steps further, however, in that it formalizes a process to use existing research and evaluates the implementation of changes made as a result of the appraisal and application of the research. The idea that research published in other library and information studies journals is being pushed aside is at odds with the EBLIP movement: it is the existing published research that is being appraised and utilized to make informed decisions or referred to in the

literature review of newer published research. Increasing the knowledge base is a familiar theme, but it cannot be said that the pool from which to draw research is considered all but empty. This journal and many others are contributing to the existing literature by publishing original research. One of the strengths of the EBLIP journal is the Evidence Summaries section. Not only are these critical appraisals of previously published research, but the critical appraisals themselves are peer reviewed. The knowledge base, therefore, is being populated with original research as well as rigorously evaluated research.

Am I still feeling defensive? Perhaps a little. I am sure that the time and effort that I have invested in EBLIP cannot help but create

some bias. On the other hand, I have seen that evidence based practice is making an impact on how numerous individuals and institutions approach decision making. I am reading, seeing and hearing about research being designed, performed and evaluated within a new framework. EBP is standard practice in the health professions and is swiftly gaining solid ground in the social sciences, education and in government. Our profession prides itself on being on the cutting edge of information access and management: if information professionals choose not to adopt the model, which has been proven time and time again to be effective, they risk being placed outside cutting edge, innovative practice. Is that where we want to be?