



LIBRARIES USING EVIDENCE PEBL Project



Scoping Survey Results

June 2006

Objective

To provide evidence to support development of a project planning tool (and associated toolkit) designed to incorporate the evidence-based library and information practice (EBLIP) framework into the project planning process. The survey allows a better understanding of the current state of awareness surrounding EBLIP, how the model is being used, and why it is not. A secondary objective was to compile a list of practitioners willing to contribute a project plan to be analysed as part of the PEBL project.

Method

68 surveys were issued to (non-CCHS Library) delegates upon arrival at the Gosford and Burwood sessions of Evidence-Based Librarianship in Practice: A Seminar with Andrew Booth¹. Surveys were to be submitted before the end of the session to enable eligibility for a lucky door prize each day – a copy of “Evidence-based practice for information professionals: a handbook” (Booth and Brice).

Surveys had a tear off slip at the top that included the name and contact details, which were collected for the purposes of the lucky door prize only. After the draw was made, these slips were removed from the survey. Analysis of which sector the respondent worked in was possible with reference to seminar registration data.

Results

51 surveys were returned, representing a response rate of 75%. Respondents represented library practitioners working in various sectors: health libraries (38%), academic libraries (36%), special libraries (22%), and school libraries (4%).

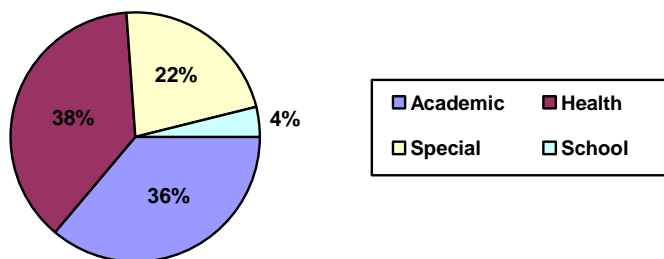


Figure 1: Library sector represented by survey responses

¹ <http://www.eblip.net.au/jun06papers.html>

Question 1

Of the 51 responses received, 74% of respondents reported they were familiar with the evidence based librarianship framework as defined by Booth (Booth 6) but not very familiar with the associated issues. 16% reported never having heard of the definition, and only 10% claim to have a good understanding of the model.



Figure 2: Familiarity with EBLIP

Question 2

76% respondents reported never approaching a workplace issue using EBLIP. Of the 24% who had previously used EBLIP, gathering (31%) and appraising (25%) evidence were the most common stages of the process to have been applied. The applying results stage was reported by 19%, closely followed by refining the question (17%). Only 8% reported undertaking the final stage of evaluating performance and disseminating results.

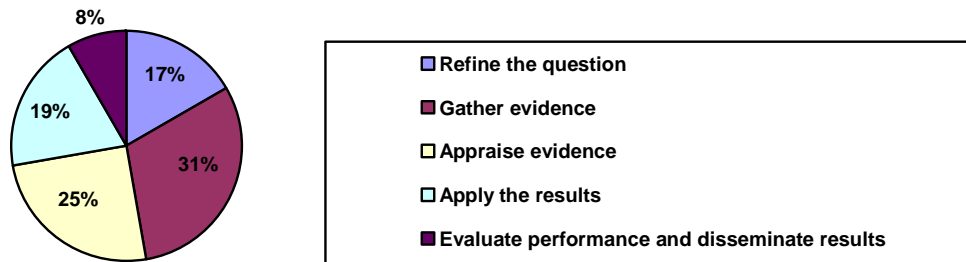


Figure 3: Stages of EBLIP incorporated

Examples of workplace issues/projects reported to have been undertaken with an evidence-based approach covered areas such as collection development, information seeking behaviour, service evaluation, implementation of a new service, and demonstrating value of a library service.

Of the 74% who had never attempted to approach a workplace issue using EBLIP, the most common reasons cited were not having had the opportunity (37%) and not knowing where to start (34%). Other reasons reported included not knowing about it (18%), and other (11%). Reasons behind the category “other” include lack of time, lack of staff, and “did it but didn’t know what it was called!”. No one cited EBLIP not being worth the effort as a reason for not have used the model.

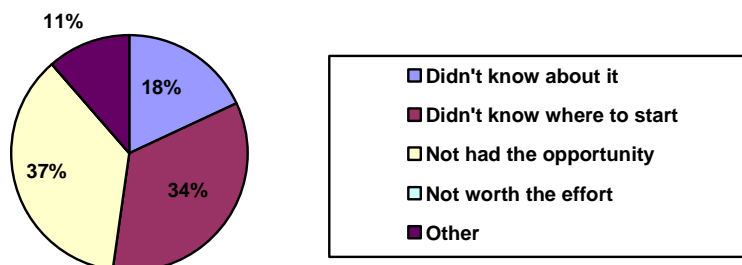


Figure 4: Reasons for not using EBLIP

Question 3

68% of survey respondents indicated their willingness to share a project plan with the PEBL project team.

Discussion

The survey results clearly support development of a project planning tool (supported by an EBLIP toolkit) as a method of encouraging the theory of EBLIP to be applied in practice. Such a tool would directly address the 2 major reasons cited by the 74% of respondents who had not used EBLIP. The categories *didn't know where to start* and *didn't know about it* accounted for more than half of the reported reasons why EBLIP was not used.

The PEBL planning tool will provide practitioners, novice to expert, with a place to start and a path to follow to ensure the best available evidence is used to tackle the workplace issue. A planning tool supported by a toolbox with the resources, information, and tools necessary to follow the pathway will help overcome the issue of not knowing about the model.

Limitations of the survey include the survey sample all demonstrating an interest in EBLIP by virtue of having registered for the seminar.

Initially it was anticipated the survey would be administered broadly, and internationally, via a listserv announcement. The project team deemed administration of this survey beyond the seminar delegates (initially intended as a pilot) would not yield additional evidence useful for the project. The existing published literature on barriers to using research in practice will provide sufficient additional evidence to suggest whether or not development of the PEBL tool will assist with application of EBLIP theory.

Works Cited

Booth, Andrew. "Exceeding Expectations: Achieving Professional Excellence by Getting Research into Practice." LIANZA 2000. Christchurch, New Zealand, 2000. August 25 2006.
<<http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/eblip/Exceed.pdf>>

Booth, Andrew, and Anne Brice, eds. Evidence-Based Practice for Information Professionals : A Handbook. London: Facet, 2004.

Appendix 1 – Survey administered June 2006

NAME:

Contact phone/email:

(Names will be removed from the survey after the lucky door prize has been drawn)

PEBL – a Project methodology for Evidence Based Librarianship ... a stepping stone between a theory and its practice

Scoping Survey – Questions

1. **Are you familiar with the evidence based librarianship (EBL) framework/process, described in this quote from Andrew Booth?** *“EBL 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 judgements”*

- never heard of it
 I have heard of it but am not very familiar with the issues
 I have a good understanding of the model

2. **Have you attempted to approach a workplace project/issue using EBL?**

If yes, which stages of the process did you incorporate

- Refine the question
 Gather the evidence (user reported, librarian observed and research derived)
 Appraise the evidence
 Apply the results
 Evaluate performance (of the impact of your project, and your application of EBL) and disseminate results

Please briefly describe your project:

If no, what has stopped you

- Didn't know about it
 Didn't know where to start
 Not had the opportunity
 Not worth the effort
 other _____

3. **Would you be willing to share a recent/current/future project plan with us?**

- No
 Yes. Please provide contact details (email/phone/postal), or email lisa.cotter@newcastle.edu.au

We are attempting to develop a project methodology which incorporates the EBL framework. By reviewing the “standard” project plans of practising library and information staff, we hope to identify the areas that need to be addressed in a refined template to facilitate evidence based practice in our profession.