

Librarians collaborating with faculty to develop and deliver an Evidence-Based Eye Care Course

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In the summer of 2011, librarians at the Harriet K. & Philip Pumerantz Library at Western University of Health Sciences worked with the Dean of the College of Optometry to develop and teach a course on Evidence Based Practice (EBP) for third year optometry students. The Dean approached the librarians about developing and teaching EBP concepts in this newly developed course.

Librarians taught sections on EBP, EBP resources, health literacy, and staying current with the literature. These sections were taught didactically utilizing TurningPoint™ clicker technology to assess initial understanding. Librarians displayed several appropriately structured PICO statements in multiple choice format. Using this clicker technology, students were required to select the “best” PICO statement. The instructor created assignments that would assess the students’ long term ability to apply EBP concepts.

While using TurningPoint™ clicker technology, it appeared that librarians were effective in teaching EBP when evaluating students immediately after the lecture. However, students were not able to apply EBP concepts effectively if structured PICO answers were not provided. Librarians concluded that they were able to effectively teach EBP concepts to students using a structured multiple choice format. However, when students were asked to apply concepts without that structured format, they were unable to do so effectively. This could have been due to the fact that the concepts taught were not being effectively assessed by the assignments. The librarians realized that there were three concerns that would need to be addressed. First, they need to collaborate more with the instructor to develop cases and assignments. Second, they need to develop a rubric for grading PICO, searching skills and search strategies. Finally, they will more clearly define EBP concepts during lecture, specifically, identifying background versus foreground questions and PICO statements versus search terms.