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Koufogiannakis, D., & Brettle, A. (2016). **Being evidence based in library and information practice**. Chicago: Neal-Schuman.

Evidence based practice (EBP), a concept articulated in the early 1990s by two professors in McMaster University's School of Medicine, developed as a way of applying research evidence to clinical decision making. Thereafter, EBP quickly developed in other fields such as dentistry, nursing, management, rehabilitation, social work, and, in 1997, librarianship. It is not surprising that EBP migrated to librarianship—mostly thanks to health science librarians who were exposed to the concept at work and quickly saw its applicability to their own profession.

What does EBP mean for librarians and information professionals? According to Koufogiannakis and Brettle, the most widely cited and accepted definition of Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP) was set out in 2000:

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. (Booth, p. 8)

In the last 15-20 years, more and more literature has appeared on EBLIP. In fact, since 2006, an open access journal on the subject, [Evidence Based Library and Information Practice](#), has been published out of the University of Alberta. Koufogiannakis and Brettle's new book is based on a model of EBLIP developed by Koufogiannakis as part of her [doctoral research](#) *How academic librarians use evidence in their decision making: Reconsidering the evidence based practice model*. Her thesis explicitly built on Booth's definition by embracing "other types of evidence as appropriate for librarianship" and by considering "how such a merging of different types of evidence can work in librarianship" (p.11).

In the first part of this book, Koufogiannakis, now Associate University Librarian at the University of Alberta, partners with Brettle, the Director of Post Graduate Research in the School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work, and Social Science at the University of Salford in Manchester England to outline a newer model of EBLIP in five chapters. Overall, their revised model "looks at the whole of EBP, incorporating research evidence

as well as local evidence and professional knowledge” (p. 13). Each chapter focuses on one aspect of the model: Articulate [the problem]; Assemble [relevant evidence from multiple sources]; Assess [the evidence for quantity and quality]; Agree [what the evidence suggests must be done to resolve the problem]; and finally Adapt [evaluate how well the problem was resolved].

In the second part of the book, the two editors turn the podium over to other highly qualified authors who address “EBLIP in Action.” The first chapter in this section, “Practitioner-researchers and EBLIP,” sets the stage for what follows. Virginia Wilson, the Director of the Centre for Evidence Based Library and Information Practice at the University of Saskatchewan, argues, “should research evidence... be lacking, practitioners are encouraged to undertake research to inform their practice” (p. 87). “Practitioner research,” she suggests, “meshes well with EBLIP, as it often takes as its focal point the consumers of the service that the practitioners are offering.... Ideally, [it] also includes a reflective piece” (p. 88).

Thereafter, various experts discuss the role of evidence-based research in academic libraries, public libraries, health libraries, school libraries, and special libraries. Each chapter includes two or three case studies to illustrate the point. For example, when the library of Tampere University of Technology in Finland was re-designed, the ultimate results were informed by “research on academic library spaces and architectural design principles” and, in addition, “architecture students’ expertise, library staff expertise and user preferences” (p. 102).

The Tampere case study illustrates EBLIP in action in an academic library. However, it is, in this reviewer’s judgement, stretching the original concept too much to suggest EBLIP is widely applicable in public, school, and most special libraries (health being the obvious exception). The reason: not much of the existing evidenced-based research is relevant to those libraries. This is largely attributable to the fact that librarians in those institutions are not normally expected to research and publish. What research there is comes from library school professors or academic and health librarians who are expected to research and publish as part of their job—and most situate their research in their own professional context. Most public, school, and special libraries do not even have access to research literature except that available through open access. Under all these circumstances, such libraries are forced to rely on, as noted, “local evidence and professional knowledge.”

In this reviewer’s mind, expanding the notion of EBLIP, as the editors would like, bastardizes the concept. To be fair, the authors of the chapter on public libraries recognize this fact: “If we seek to measure public librarian participation in EBP against early definitions of EBP and evidence-based librarianship (EBL) as a practice which involves ‘critically appraising and incorporating research evidence from library science (and other disciplines) into daily practice and encouraging librarians to conduct high quality qualitative and quantitative research,’ then active engagement appears relatively low.” (p. 107).

That said, this book is not without value. It is well written, well researched, and each chapter contains a plethora of references for follow up. It's just that it doesn't make a convincing case that the notion of evidence based practice is applicable beyond academic and health libraries unless one is prepared to render the concept meaningless.

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