Optimistic examples of how the information professional can help promote and facilitate the ideals behind evidence-based nursing practice were well received in an atmosphere of collaboration and positive discussion. An overview of the symposium and electronic presentations are available from

http://nahrs.library.kent.edu/resource/symposium/

Evidence-Based Librarianship Folio Course: an evaluation

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Back in May, myself and colleagues signed up for the Evidence Based Librarianship course, delivered via Andrew Booth at ScHARR. This course is designed to provide flexible learning so rather than having to take a day out to attend a full-day course, the content is delivered via email over a series of weeks.

After signing up, we were all assigned to a buddy group. Over 630 people had signed up to undertake the course so a number of buddy groups were set up containing about 6-8 people from all over the World. The idea of the buddy group was to allow us to discuss the set tasks with fellow Librarians. We also saved all the emails that we sent in a Word document which we submitted as a portfolio at the end of the course.

The first task was an icebreaker designed for us to get to know our buddies. This was a general introduction to ourselves and then a task asking us to pick a character from film, book, TV etc. that epitomised our character. This was

probably the hardest part of the course for me as I attempted to choose a character that I empathised with.   After finally deciding that I was like the White Rabbit in Alice in Wonderland, we then moved on to the more important tasks.

The course followed a step-by-step sequential approach. The early tasks were relatively straightforward, designed to give us some confidence and build up to more weighty tasks later on.

The tasks varied and some of them our outlined here. For example, one of the first tasks was to read some definitions of Evidence Based Librarianship and decide which we felt was the most appropriate and how we might improve the definitions. We then voted for our chosen definition.

We were also asked to choose a librarianship question and break it down into the SPICE formula (a variation on the PICO formula) which stands for: Setting, population intervention, comparison and evaluation so that we could formulate an evidence based question.

Following on from this, we were asked to suggest suitable databases to find evidence on the six domains of Evidence Based information (Crumley and Kourogiannakis) which had previously been outlined in an email from Andrew Booth.

We then moved on to applicability and were asked to describe why a particular research article would not apply to our own setting. We took this one step further by appraising an article using a PowerPoint tutorial which prompted us to look at particular aspects of the research. We built on these skills by choosing our own piece of research and by using a relevant checklist were asked to critically appraise the article using yes, no or don't know answers.

Finally, we were asked to chose an area of professional practice that we felt would lend itself to a systematic review.

In amongst these tasks, we also received emails from Andrew Booth, highlighting certain issues relating to Evidence-Based-Librarianship. Each buddy group was also given their own individual task to complete. In my case, we were provided with some examples of Evidence Based Practice and had to decide which aspect(s) we felt we, as Librarians, were least equipped to carry out and the reasons why.

All tasks were sent out via email and we were given a time limit in which to respond. We emailed responses to our buddy group and also saved all our responses in our portfolio.

The buddy group system in theory was a good idea due to the large number of delegates registering for the course. Unfortunately, many delegates obviously then removed themselves from the course or dropped out as the course progressed as I received little or nothing from most of my buddies. Towards the end of the course, I became completely buddyless but I have tried not to take it personally!

Another drawback with the course was the scheduling. As the course progressed and we became more involved in critical appraisal, the amount of time required for these tasks grew and at one point, I felt that I was inundated with tasks to complete in a short period of time. I would have preferred the course to provide a more even workload.

On a more positive note, I really liked the delivery of the course. The online Delivery facilitated flexible learning at a time that was convenient for me. Several of my colleagues had also undertaken the course so we were able to discuss

issues. Perhaps if this hadn't been the case I may have felt a bit isolated due to my lack of buddy group.

Overall, I found the course varied and interesting. Although much of the information was not new to me, the course did make me think about issues and relate evidence based practice to my own setting. In teaching Evidence Based Practice to students and staff, we are always relating the concept to the health setting so it was interesting to see how the techniques could be transferred to other professions. It was also a nice change to be able to undertake a learningexperience at my own pace and I did feel that I was challenging issues and using a part of my brain that may have got a bit rusty!

I would definitely recommend the course to anyone who is interested in evidence based librarianship with the proviso that the amount of work does mount up towards the end of the course. One option may be to extend the length of the course but the fact that the course was covered in a concise amount of time did mean that enthusiasm and interest remained throughout the course.