

# Increasing instructional relevance based on student reflections after they search for evidence

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# Context

- Integrating best available evidence into practice is a core competency of the Scholar role as within the CANMEDS framework.
- Librarians are integrated into curriculum courses
- Year 3 students attend a “Searching for evidence” refresher

# Purpose

**Our aim:** Invite students to articulate their strengths and knowledge gaps in searching for evidence, to help us to provide more effective library instruction.

**Assumption:** You don't know what people are thinking unless you ask

# What we did...

## 1. Revised assignment to include a reflective component

Asked students to:

- Describe a challenge they faced when searching for evidence

OR

- Identify a strategy/tool that made it easier to find the evidence they needed

# What we did (continued)

2. Re-weighted items so 50% of the grade focused on reflection vs search mechanics
3. Did not increase length of assignment

What we learned

# “I’m in trouble!” moments: Evidence-finding challenges identified by students

Challenge: **finding high quality research that can be applied to the exact patient in the scenario.** Many articles had small variations

there are **too many articles** on PubMed that it's hard to go through them all to find what you're looking for.


One challenge I faced was **finding the correct medical terminology to use** in formulating my PICO

sometimes it is **difficult to access journals** when I'm not on a university network

# Aha! moments: Evidence-finding strategies learned by students

## 1. PICO interface in TRIP (Turning Research Into Practice) database

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**TRIP**  
Liberating the literature

SEARCH **PICO** ADVANCED RECENT

Population:

Intervention:

Comparison:

Outcome:



# Aha! moments: Evidence-finding strategies learned by students

## 2. Boolean operators

One strategy that made it easier to find relevant research was by using advanced search functions in PubMed. For example, using the "OR" "AND" functions

I found that using the commands AND and OR while searching helped me rapidly narrow my search to find more specific information.

# How we are applying what we've learned

Reinforcing strategies students learned –incorporation in other classes  
(e.g, library session in Y3 Pediatric clerkship)

Using what we learned to inform library instruction for Y1

- Added a search comparison activity
- Asked students to reflect on search challenges, surprises
- Asked students to identify searching topics they want to learn more about

Use post-assignment feedback as a teaching moment – highlight additional strategies to overcome searching challenges

# Conclusion

- Incorporating a reflection activity into existing library instruction helps students recognize practice uncertainty and knowledge gaps in searching for current best evidence
- Knowing what it is about the searching experience that makes students feel frustrated, uncertain, excited helps librarians meet students where they are at and improve instruction to address those feelings

# Thank you!

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