5-31-2017

Are We Dreaming or Doing? How Health Science Graduates Access Information in their Professional Lives

Valeria Long  
*Grand Valley State University, longv@gvsu.edu*

Betsy Williams  
*Grand Valley State University, williab2@gvsu.edu*

Barbara C. Harvey  
*Grand Valley State University, harveyb@gvsu.edu*

Christopher A. Kierkus  
*Grand Valley State University, kierkusc@gvsu.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_presentations](http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_presentations)

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_presentations)

Recommended Citation


[http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_presentations/62](http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_presentations/62)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Presentations* by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.
Are we dreaming or doing?
How health science graduates access information in their professional lives

Valeria Lohn, M.D., Betsy Williams, M.L.S., Barbara Harvey, M.A. in LIS, Grand Valley State University Libraries
Christopher Kierkus, Ph.D., professor of Criminal Justice, Grand Valley State University
*Corresponding author: wlohr@gvsu.edu

Why?
We wanted to know if our health sciences and nursing graduates' experiences at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) prepared them to find, evaluate, and apply information to their clinical practice and patient education needs. While we were most interested in the library's impact, we wanted to know where they learned search skills and which resources they use most frequently as health care professionals.

92%
of all survey respondents indicated their experiences at GVSU had prepared them for finding information in their professional practice.

What advice would you give to students in your field regarding finding and using information while in school?

"Learn how to evaluate your sources. The best ways to find information will probably change over time as new technologies become available, but it will always be important to understand what you're reading and how well it applies to your situation."

92%of all survey respondents indicated their experiences at GVSU had prepared them for finding information in their professional practice.

89%stated they felt confident applying information to their practice.

What is one thing you wish you had learned at GVSU that would have helped you find and use information?

"I wish there had been more introduction of different resources available. I feel like I continually utilize the same sources of information because I don't know how to use others."

87%stated they felt confident evaluating information.

87%stated they felt confident applying information to their practice.

82%stated they felt confident evaluating information.

How?
In consultation with our university's statistical consulting center, we created an anonymous survey using SurveyMonkey®. The survey contained quantitative, qualitative, and open ended questions.

The project was reviewed by GVSU's Human Research Review Committee and qualified for exempt status.

In November 2016, emails were sent to 3529 alumni of several GVSU health sciences and nursing programs.

The first question asked respondents to indicate if they were currently working in a health care related field. Only those responding affirmatively could continue the survey.

Reminders to take the survey were sent following Thanksgiving 2016. The survey closed in early December 2016, and 451 valid responses were received.

Survey responses are still undergoing analysis. Preliminary results from quantitative data show that while library instruction, guides, and consultation are significant, most graduates credit their instructors as the most important source of learning research skills.

What is one thing you learned at GVSU that has helped you find and use information pertaining to your professional practice?

"GVSU taught me how to search for research that is both current and relevant to clinical practice. I am confident in my ability to differentiate between reliable sources and non-scholarly authors. As a result, I am able to apply the concepts that I have learned through research to clinical practice and overall improve patient outcomes."

Most frequently used resources

PubMed
Other* (e.g., UpToDate, CINAHL, Discipline-specific websites)**

Primary reasons for selecting these resources were currency, ease of use, and accuracy.

"How to filter through research articles to find relevant information, and a systematic approach to learning to apply that knowledge to appropriate patients."

From whom did you learn information research skills?

26%Formal library instruction
38%Formal subject guides
11%Librarians
70%Classmates
42%Professors

As a practicing RN I found evidence based practice to be the best way to improve healthcare. Learning how and where to find accurate research articles about it was a very helpful thing that I learned from GVSU."

What’s next?
Information gleaned from this study will help inform instruction and collection development, and launch discussion on how librarians can promote concepts of information seeking that relate to professional information needs.