

“Evidence-based Educational Practices for Public Health: How We Teach Matters” Takeaways

December 2020

An eight-member team of the Teaching Working Group of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Task Force published their findings in *Pedagogy in Health Promotion* in December 2020. Their goal was three-fold, to: assess briefly the current status of evidence-based teaching in public health; strengthen the case for using evidence-based teaching practices in public health courses; and propose strategies for educators in public health to engage along a continuum of evidence-based teaching. The article, entitled “Evidence-based Educational Practices for Public Health: How We Teach Matters” may be accessed at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2373379920978421> and takeaways from the article are highlighted below.

The article:

- **Defines** evidence-based teaching (EBT) as “encompass[ing] those strategies for which there is research support for the technique’s effectiveness, with effectiveness defined as having a demonstrably positive impact on some aspect of student learning and success” (Center for Innovations in Learning, 2019)*
- **Proposes** that EBT: is demonstrated by student mastery of specific short-term learner outcomes (e.g. enhanced effectiveness such as represented by improved knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes); increases the likelihood of successful completion of a particular public health degree or program, which represents an intermediate- or long-term outcome; and ultimately, posits that effective teaching in public health aims to produce well-prepared graduates who contribute to a ready workforce (impact 1) who are able to improve the health of the public (impact 2)
- **Outlines** the types of evidence needed to prove the effectiveness of EBT
- **Acknowledges** the existence of barriers to generating compelling evidence and adopting an evidence-based practice framework when evaluating strategies for education
- **Correlates** evidence-based approaches in public health with evidence-based approaches to teaching
- **Advises** on resources that inform on evidence-based teaching strategies
- **Highlights** effective evidence-based teaching practices that improve student learning outcomes
- **Recognizes** that some environments are not sympathetic towards EBT, suggesting alternative supports
- **Encourages** both seasoned faculty and newcomers to the field to incorporate EBT into existing public health curricula and to begin by making small changes
- **Promotes** greater public health faculty engagement in both the consumption of educational scholarship as well as the production of teaching and learning research
- **Advocates** for the wide dissemination of findings
- **Concludes** with a call to action for EBT that improves student learning.

*Center for Innovations in Learning (2019). *Effective practiced: Research briefs and evidence ratings*. Temple University.

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See details about ASPPH’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning initiative at <https://www.aspph.org/teach-research/scholarship-of-teaching-and-learning/>.

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