

**A Paradigm Shift for Teaching Research: Evidence-Based Practice**  
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**Problem:** Teaching nursing research has remained fairly static. Many classes emphasize *how-to-do* research. Many nurses may never do research, but could benefit from *how-to-use* research findings and methods.

**Evidence:** Many schools teach nursing research as *how-to-do*.

**Strategy:** An approach to teaching nursing research for master's students that focuses on research utilization, evidence-based practice (EBP).

**Practice change:** Changes in 2 courses (taught by 3-5 instructors for ~80 students/year): research methods, and a writing course in which students propose a master's project. Both were reorganized into modules with specific learning activities, evaluations.

In both, active learning is emphasized. Activities include evaluation of published studies with emphasis on using findings; weekly discussions focus on issues in nursing research. Readings (studies) are selected to match specialties/interests of student cohorts. The methods textbook has a practice focus. The writing course introduces EBP as a process leading to practice changes. Most student projects proposed are syntheses of evidence about a clinical topic that lead to recommendations or protocols, although students can propose a study.

**Evaluation:** Student evaluations for both classes have changed from almost no open-ended comments to many such as: "teaching strategy very effective;" "this difficult subject almost seems easy... [enjoyed] concrete examples applicable to my practice. ...instructor encouraged critical thinking, collaboration, application of concepts learned. Assignments were challenging and facilitated learning. Real-life examples... valuable in making the subject matter come alive." "Challenging but invigorating." Alumni evaluations indicate that alumni perceive they can truly change practice based upon evidence.

**Results:** Specific course organization and active learning strategies make research content real/appealing to graduate nursing students.

**Recommendations:** An EBP approach to teaching nursing research to master's students is beneficial when the focus is *how-to-use* findings, how to make practice changes. Active learning strategies enhance student satisfaction with learning and enhance ability to use EBP upon graduation.

### **Bibliography**

DiCenso, A., Guyatt, G., & Ciliska, D. (2005). *Evidence-based nursing. A guide to clinical practice*. St. Louis MO: Elsevier Mosby.