

# Evidence-based Educational Practices for Public Health: How We Teach Matters

Takeaways from a Manuscript by the Teaching Working Group  
of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Task Force

May 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 Task Force created a manuscript for submission to the journal of Pedagogy of Health Promotion in the spring of 2020. The 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 Manuscript:

- **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 strong 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.

The writing team was led by Dr. Sophie Godley (BU), and composed of Drs. Betsy Aumiller (Penn State), Viviana Horigian (Miami), Naila Khalil (Wright State), Jessica Kruger (University at Buffalo), Cara Pennel (UTexas, Galveston), Emily Youatt (Michigan), and the Teaching Working Group chair, Dr. Marc Kiviniemi (Kentucky). Dr. Shan Mohammed (Northeastern) chaired the SoTL Task Force. Dr. Laura Magaña (ASPPH) provided vision and leadership and Ms. Elizabeth Weist (ASPPH) provided direction and support.

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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