

A reflection on my progression toward entrustment of EPA 5

I recently attended an Introduction to Research seminar and began work on my DVM3 research project. This reflection describes how these experiences have helped further my development towards entrustment for EPA 5: **Formulate relevant questions and retrieve evidence to advance care.**

I have always been passionate and curious about science, especially that involving animals. However, I honestly thought the idea of “research” was boring. Reflecting on it now, I am realising I actually quite enjoy research - when it is on a topic I have genuine interest in, and that can keep my attention.

In the years leading up to my commencement in the DVM course, I associated the word “research” with long nights spent painstakingly reading never-ending peer-reviewed articles on a topic I was assigned, consisting of words I barely understood. Of course, I appreciated the value of thorough investigation when answering important questions, but I had little interest in it becoming a part of my daily life. When my partner began work on his PhD, I remember thinking I could never spend 3-4 years of my life doing non-stop research. I feel silly thinking that now, as I will most definitely be doing research for the rest of my life, as a vet, and in fact, I do research almost daily now.

Over the years, my science-enthused partner has influenced me to ask more questions and dig deeper, rather than accepting what I hear or read as fact. Because of this, I am much more likely to look information up, and from a reputable source, than I once was. This includes information like “why is turmeric used as an anti-inflammatory - and *how* does it work?” and “what is the most efficient way to insulate a campervan” – everyday things, not just vet research.

Starting my DVM research project I am realising the two main reasons I used to avoid “research”. 1) If it is on a topic I am not interested in, I do not want to read 100 articles on it and will lose focus very quickly. 2) I was not always looking in the best places for reputable sources. When deciding on a topic for my current research project I found myself very engaged and almost excited. I remember thinking “I’m a little embarrassed geeking out on research like this”. I was able to bounce ideas off of my partner and ended up coming up with a list of questions I wanted to find answers to, and better yet, that I was enthusiastic about investigating.

I am quickly becoming more comfortable with research and have a list of go-to sources. Included in that list are sites I have recently been introduced to in DVM3 lectures to quickly look up therapeutic drugs, toxins and antimicrobials when in practice - which I know will become a part of an almost daily routine.

While the Introduction to Research seminar was a good way to keep me accountable and block out time to begin research, I did not find the module to be especially beneficial. I feel I have gotten to a point where I can come up with appropriate questions without a step-by-step module holding my hand. As my knowledge expands, I will know more of what to question and investigate. I am getting better at finding relevant sources and picking out the important information without bias. For these reasons, I believe I have reached an entrustment level of 4 for EPA 5.