
Ovid® Synthesis

How a university and health system bridge the academia-practice gap to develop a culture of EBP and quality improvement



University of Alabama at Birmingham builds student confidence with Ovid[®] Synthesis

The challenge

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the UAB Health System, one of the largest academic medical centers in the U.S., have coupled their academic and practice worlds to create a successful culture of evidence-based practice (EBP) and quality improvement (QI) across the institutions.

UAB Hospital is a 1,207-bed tertiary hospital and the only Level I Trauma Center in Alabama. UAB, a public university, offers healthcare programs in medicine, nursing, dentistry, optometry, and public health, among others.

As a health system, UAB focuses on strengthening EBP and QI by integrating clinical expertise, patient experiences, and research to help medical professionals make the best decisions to improve patient outcomes and safety.

In 2010, the U.S. Institute of Medicine set a target for 90% of all decisions made in healthcare to be evidence-based by 2020.¹ However, as of 2023, only about 30% of healthcare received at medical facilities nationwide is based on available evidence, leaving a large gap between the goal and actual practice.²

The leadership team at UAB strongly believes in the direct correlation between EBP improvements and patient outcomes and set out to advance their operational QI and research capabilities.

The solution: Ovid Synthesis

UAB determined that a built-for-purpose technology solution could further its QI goals, solve the common challenges clinical staff experience, and assist its DNP students in bridging the gap between academia and practice. The group selected Ovid Synthesis from Wolters Kluwer to help organize, standardize, and facilitate QI projects.

When introduced to this solution, UAB immediately saw the possibility of facilitating the development of improvement competencies in DNP students by providing a structured approach with systematic, step-by-step guidance.

This solution would allow faculty to observe student development with improvement projects over time and provide real-time feedback throughout the curriculum.

UAB believed that Ovid Synthesis would make QI less intimidating, so students could gain the knowledge they could translate and apply while developing confidence in their skills. The team saw the application of a technology solution as the best way to create a collaborative environment and meet a robust standard for improvement project development. As a result, student projects developed within Ovid Synthesis would be at an appropriate level of rigor for dissemination.

UAB's objectives in the advancement of QI include:



Developing and implementing more QI projects with health system benefits



Reducing project variation by using a standard methodology



Increasing project rigor so all projects are consistent, objective, and thorough



Building improvement competency for its Doctor of Nursing (DNP) students.

Prior to applying the evidence-based workflow solution, the UAB Nursing Partnership leadership team intentionally included a strong concentration on QI in their strategic plan for nursing. Because of this emphasis on QI, partnership leaders designed a process to focus DNP students on projects with health system benefits. The aim was to improve student outcomes while creating value for the organization.

The program began at UAB in the School of Nursing and the School of Health Professions, with Ovid® Synthesis available to faculty and students at the School of Nursing, the School of Healthcare Professions, and members of the healthcare system in DNP and masters' programs.

"I love this tool. It allows the user to see the big picture and progression as well as keep everything in one place."

"[Built-in Guidance] questions assisted me in organizing my project."

– DNP student testimonials

The results

UAB's custom workflow template was configured to align closely with the DNP curriculum to help students acquire knowledge while translating and applying skills with Ovid Synthesis. It was specifically designed as a teaching tool to help students increase competency for future QI projects.

With this new approach, DNP students have gained a simple, standardized view of the stages of a strong QI project. Success metrics include expanded student research skills and competencies and improved patient care and outcomes.

Early reactions from students and faculty have been positive. In response to a survey, DNP students in the pilot program were impressed with the literature search capabilities of Ovid Synthesis, which increased the likelihood of integrating the important aspect of literature search and synthesis into a QI project while creating a less intimidating entry into the mechanics of the search process. They also appreciated the guidance and structure offered by the technology.

Experience with Ovid Synthesis illustrated the importance of integrating the library team into the literature search process to develop more rigorous search skills. The library team can help advanced students whose projects may need additional evidence from more complex search strategies and processes or those that require the rigor of systematic reviews. Collaboration with reference librarians ensures that students understand the appropriate process for completing a literature review while still utilizing the functionality of Ovid Synthesis for their whole project.

"Will definitely continue to use [Ovid Synthesis] for the remainder of my project."

"Would love to be able to use this product at work."

– DNP student testimonials

Too often, nursing and other health staff in clinical settings find it challenging to manage and implement EBP and QI projects.

These healthcare professionals experience:



Work silos, with limited collaboration or views across teams or departments



Overload and burnout, leaving little time and energy for research projects



Lack of oversight and mentorship to guide them through projects



Lack of skills in EBP and QI in clinical practice.

The UAB implementation of Ovid® Synthesis provides students and frontline staff with:

- A step-by-step project planning process with prompts and guidance
- Templates to assure them that they are approaching their research correctly at each stage
- Shared tools to eliminate workflow silos
- Links to existing guidance and resources
- Coaching and feedback to align students and managers around project outcomes
- Templates for internal and external dissemination in Word, PowerPoint, and poster formats.

For managers and leaders, this solution helps them manage multiple projects with:

- Prebuilt configurable templates to ensure consistent, high-quality projects across an organization
- Flexibility to design a framework tailored to an organization
- Structure and support for staff, students, and residents
- A centralized dashboard for an overview of projects, reducing duplication and providing transparency
- The ability to guide students and staff to the latest research for critical appraisal of full-text literature
- A manageable and searchable archive for documentation needed for accreditations and regulatory requirements.

Implementing Ovid Synthesis to facilitate their QI projects has enabled UAB to support a process where faculty and leadership can monitor and support student progress and gain an overview of projects. A standardized project structure creates a framework that builds student confidence and research skills. This leads to greater enthusiasm for these projects and a determination from students to disseminate the findings and change practice for the better.

After early pilot success, the Academic Practice Partnership initiated discussions about using the application more widely in both academic and operational contexts.

About Ovid Synthesis

For healthcare leaders who prioritize patient-centered care and quality improvement, Ovid Synthesis is a workflow solution that drives a culture of evidence-based practice and nursing excellence. Unlike other homegrown solutions or manual workarounds, Ovid Synthesis was built in partnership with top healthcare quality experts to simplify the entire research and QI process.

Scan the QR code to visit the Ovid Synthesis website to learn more, or contact sales@ovid.com for a personalized demo.

<https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/ovid/platforms-products/ovid-synthesis>



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References

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