

Few professionals keep current

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Researchers at the University of Gothenburg and the University of Borås in Sweden have looked at how professionals in different occupational groups seek and use information and keep updated after finishing their education. The results show that teachers seek information they can use in their own teaching and that librarians focus on helping library users find information, while nurses just don't have the time.

The high degree of specialisation in today's work life demands that many occupational groups stay updated on new developments in their fields. In the research project Information seeking in the transition from educational to occupational practice, which is part of the larger research programme LearnIT, researchers interviewed professionals in different sectors to find out how different occupational groups seek information.

Use of information sources

One thing the researchers looked at was which information sources the studied occupational groups use in work life compared to the groups' information practices during education.

The findings of the study are presented in the writing series Lärande och IT (Learning and IT), which comprises the final reports of the major research programme LearnIT at the University of Gothenburg.

Teachers, nurses and librarians are all part of knowledge-intensive professions that require scientifically based higher education and their occupational practices are partly based on research.

Yet, being information literate as a student does not automatically transfer to being information literate in work life.

Teachers looking for teaching material

When a student graduates and starts teaching professionally, he or she starts seeking for information for different purposes than before. The focus changes from finding research based information to finding information that can be used as teaching material in the daily work with students. Teachers also spend time teaching students how to seek and use information. The interviewed teachers also said that they, as students, did not learn how to remain updated with the latest research as practicing teachers.

Difficult to live up to

While the interviewed nurses were in fact told that they should keep up with current research as professionals, they said that this is easier said than done. Nursing [education](#) is about producing texts while the nursing profession is about attending to patients. The time it takes to keep updated on nursing science research is simply not available, making such practice uncommon.

Part of the job

Librarians differ from teachers and nurses in that information seeking is essential to the profession. However, similar to the teachers, the interviewed librarians were never trained to stay current.

Time at work earmarked for activities such as literature studies is scarce in all three occupational groups, although the librarians benefit from their extensive access to [information](#) resources at work.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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