The Value of Information Literacy

Conceptions of BSc Nursing Students at a UK University
Research results from a Doctoral thesis by Dr Antony Osborne

Objectives

1. To explore BSc Nursing students’ conceptions of information literacy and its perceived value as part of their overall learning experience during the three year period of their university course.

2. To examine the value and relevance of information literacy in searching for evidence-based materials within their placements as an indicator of its place in the ‘real world’ of the nurse.

3. To evaluate the usefulness of information literacy currently taught on this course in the light of the results of the research and make recommendations as to how it should be taught in the future.

Methodology

The research used phenomenography which is a qualitative research methodology that investigates the diverse ways in which people experience a phenomenon.

Key findings

- Librarians should not make assumptions about what students should/do know
- Students do experience library anxiety
- Students found the library sessions helpful
- Conflict between University and clinical learning. There are varying expectations (academic versus ‘caring’)

- Research needs to be more integrated into the ‘real world’ of the nurse
- Importance of informal learning
- Attitudinal influence of qualified practitioners
- Students work better in small groups and IL sessions must be directly relevant to their course

Areas for future research

- Information literacy as a socio-cultural practice
- Forging information literacy links with feeder institutions

- Do students know what they think they know?
- Use of peer learning in information literacy