Att bli bibliotekarie

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The aim of this thesis is to deepen the knowledge on information seeking among Swedish library and information science (LIS) students and newly employed academic librarians, as well as on how information seeking is attributed meaning in the shaping of professional identities. The aim also includes understanding and problematising the relationship between educational and professional practice. The thesis reports on two empirical studies. The first set of empirical material was produced in five focus groups with 25 participating students (2005-2006). The second set off material was produced through 17 individual, semi-structured interviews with academic librarians (2007). The material was analysed from a sociocultural perspective, focusing on the tools, activities, relations and cognitive authorities of study-related and work-related information seeking. An overall analysis of the material was also undertaken, drawing on the discursive negotiation of professional objects and key narratives.

The main results show the complexity of LIS students' and novice librarians' approaches to information seeking. As students' information seeking is situated in the practice of higher education, they need to focus on the use and production of academic texts, and on framing the concept of information seeking analytically. At the same time many students are strongly oriented towards the professional practice of library work, striving to develop a technical expertise enabling them to meet the presumed expectations of library users. These sometimes colliding interests are illustrated by students' accounts of uncertainty before working life, sometimes expressed as "a gap between theory and practice". Most new-coming librarians are also focused on the information needs of the library users. Some participants express that library managers encourage individual information monitoring, on a voluntary basis, of for example LIS research, but the organisational incentives for such activities are scarce. However, *Journal clubs* function as infrastructures for collective learning and information sharing, related to the pedagogical aspects of library work. A common trait of the two groups is the normative and somewhat sceptical attitude towards easily accessible tools for information seeking such as Google.

In the analysis four professional identities are identified: an academically oriented, a technically oriented, a communicatively oriented, and a conservatively oriented identity. All four are present in both educational and work practices. Regarding the relationship between the two practices, the results show that academically and communicatively oriented participants often experience themselves as able to re-contextualise their information seeking capabilities when entering working life, while the technically and conservatively oriented participants tend to understand the transition as one of discontinuity.

Keywords: academic librarians, LIS students, information seeking, professional identity, LIS education, professional practice, transition, professional project, Sweden