

Profiling the information seeking behaviour of nursing students

Dr Peter Stokes and Dr Robert Priharjo

University Library and HEMS

The aim

To produce information seeking behaviour profiles for nursing students based on their personality, approach to learning, and self-efficacy with information literacy. These profiles can then be applied to information skills sessions to provide students with a more 'individual' experience and improve student satisfaction.

Benefits

- Students will be aware of their information seeking preferences, becoming more efficacious and potentially improving their academic performance
- Students will be better equipped to undertake evidence-based practice once qualified
- Librarians and academics will be able to tailor information seeking skills sessions to match the students' preferred ways of gathering information thus increasing student satisfaction

The approach

Finding information is a necessary requirement for students studying within Higher Education Institutions. Nursing students in particular are expected to know how to locate up to date best evidence efficiently in order to deliver evidence-based practice. The way students conduct their literature search differs within groups and knowing their individual preferences would benefit both the librarians and academics facilitating information seeking teaching sessions and when the students are performing their own personal searches. Having an information seeking behaviour profile would categorize students into a certain type and allow sessions to be tailored accordingly. It could also provide students with an awareness of their preferred approach allowing them to search more effectively.

Personal characteristics are known to impact on the way users seek information with personality, learning style and self-efficacy three of these attributes. Previous research into these three attributes (Stokes and Urquhart, 2011; 2015) generated 7 information seeking behaviour profiles and this current study aimed to confirm or adapt these profiles.

Nursing students (n=175) were invited in class and subsequently via email to complete an online questionnaire comprising sections on information seeking, personality, self-efficacy with information literacy and approaches to learning, with a response rate of 49% (n=86). The questionnaire replicated the earlier study in order to allow comparison and meta-analysis of the results, thus increasing the robustness of the profiles. Data was analysed via SPSS using Chi-square tests, odds ratios and binomial logistic regression.

In this new study, the results reconfirmed many of the original findings and associations. Defining the problem, Identifying keywords, Chancing, Reviewing, and Keyword searching were again the top five ranked Information Seeking processes suggesting nurses generally are still searching in a similar manner. The link between high levels of self-efficacy with information literacy and the Strategic and Deep approaches to learning was again significant, and several of the elements of information seeking were again linked with different approaches to learning and personality (e.g. Exploring breadth with Deep learners, Networking with Surface learners). There were however, several marked differences between this study and the previous one and this led to a

revision of the seven profiles. On combining the data from both studies the seven profiles were reduced to six: Deep Explorer, Deep Adventurer, Strategic Detector, Strategic All-rounder, Strategic Collector, Surface Co-ordinator. These profiles are now available for librarians and academics to use to find out students' profiles which can then be used to tailor information skills sessions. This will hopefully lead to an increase in student academic performance and satisfaction.

The outcome(s)

The profiles have yet to be used within the academic setting, but this will take place during the next academic year. Dissemination of the results at two International conferences and at the Learning and Teaching conference at ARU has allowed the findings to be received by a wide audience.

Profile	Future Development
<p>Tutor name: Dr Peter Stokes and Dr Robert Priharjo</p> <p>Faculty/Service: University Library and HEMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional research using different cohorts of nursing students or other disciplines could further enhance the robustness of the profiles. • A correlation study to measure the association between each profile and final degree classification would benefit the University in enhancing the number of students with higher class degrees. • Another project will be undertaken to help students identify their own profiles and thus create an action plan for their future information seeking development.
	<h3>Recommendations</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess students information literacy skills as early as possible • Assist new students in examining their information seeking profiles in order to maximise their learning approach • Increase collaboration between librarians and academics