

# VERKTYG FÖR LÄRANDE

## **Informationssökning och informationsanvändning i kommunal vuxenutbildning**

Cecilia Gärdén

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In education today, self-directed learning is promoted as an ideal as opposed to teacher-led instruction. This approach is reflected in public inquiries, proposals, syllabi and grading criteria, as well as in schoolwork in practice. The approach has implications for various stakeholders in education, for example, students, teachers and librarians. Students at different educational levels are expected to develop their understanding of how to seek and select information, access, critically examine and understand different texts and their relations to other texts as well as produce their own texts in different contexts. Information seeking and use are key aspects of schoolwork and learning, and students are assumed to develop competence in information literacy.

The thesis aims to deepen our knowledge of information practices in municipal adult education, by exploring the information seeking and information use associated with a specific school assignment. The theoretical framework used is a socio-cultural approach. In the study the following concepts have been identified as particularly important: mediation, sense-making, learning, practice, tools, scaffolds and interaction. From a socio-cultural perspective, the thesis explores 1) how adult students, teachers and librarians interact in information seeking and use in the practice of working with a complex school assignment, 2) what tools and scaffolds are used, and why, 3) how information is used by adult students to construct knowledge and make sense, and 4) what elements of information literacy emerge in the interaction around the assignment. To answer the research questions, a qualitative case study was conducted. The case study included 43 interviews, 30 observations and 17 documents, which provided in-depth knowledge of the interaction between individuals, practice and tools.

Study results reveal an absence of interaction in information seeking and use in the educational context, as well as a lack of common references in the form of tools and support, leading to difficulties for the participants in achieving the results that were expected, according to learning objectives. In the tension between the school's discursive practice and the participants' self-directed learning, several critical elements of information literacy emerged, including the distinction between quantitative and qualitative information seeking, critical approaches towards information, knowledge of genres, the ability to identify and use various tools, and the ability to communicate conceptually about information seeking and use. The self-directed learning approach entails a number of challenges for adult students, teachers and librarians. These challenges involve building bridges between the rhetoric and practice of information literacy, developing institutional and social structures that facilitate and benefit the quality of interaction, creating common frames of reference for school assignments and clarifying standards and rules in the school context.

**Keywords:** information seeking, information use, information literacy, municipal adult education, students, school library, user study, socio-cultural perspective, Sweden