

HÖGSKOLAN VÄST

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# Organizing for workplace learning in the digitalization of municipal healthcare services

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# Abstract

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This dissertation explores the organizing for workplace learning in the digitalization and innovation of municipal healthcare services.

In many countries, digitalization and innovation are increasingly seen as vital tools for tackling societal challenges and promoting sustainability, particularly concerning the growing gap between available resources and the increasing need for healthcare services. Despite the widespread belief in digitalization and innovation as solutions, and a generally techno-utopian or techno-optimistic outlook on digital technologies, the digital transformation of the healthcare sector has proven to be complex and has not always yielded the anticipated positive results.

The research in the dissertation is delimited to a Nordic healthcare sector, focusing on healthcare for elderly within municipal homecare and nursing homes in Sweden and Norway. This dissertation is based on two studies, performed with a qualitative, engaged scholarship approach. In the first study, several rounds of focus group interviews are conducted with leaders and employees in municipalities in Sweden and Norway, focusing on current use, needs, and future potential for technology and digitalization, as well as mapping, analyzing, and further needs for development, organization, decisions, and guidelines to sharpen the focus on learning and knowledge. Study II was organized as a case study following an innovation pilot project in healthcare within a Swedish municipality. Individual and group interviews were conducted with leaders and employees, and participatory observation took place during workshops throughout the process of the pilot.

The findings highlight a gap between the current workforce's competencies and the skills necessary for effectively implementing and utilizing new technologies. Organizing for workplace learning requires *organized learning*, emphasizing an active and engaged management. A three-part strategy for organized learning is proposed, including: i) individualization through learner-centeredness, ii) the management's use of tools and strategies, and iii) fostering a participatory environment.

This dissertation enhances the understanding of organizing for learning in the context of digitalization and innovation within municipal healthcare services, focusing on both individual and organizational perspectives, particularly the role of management.