

# Educator Type

Save to myBoK

**Elizabeth Bowman, MPA, RHIA**, knew education would be a good career fit for one simple reason—she liked school.

“[Teaching] attracted me because I had always liked school,” she says, matter-of-factly. Bowman also liked explaining things to people and has been doing it for almost 30 years as a professor in the College of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (Memphis). “Some people can be wonderful practitioners and have a lot of knowledge but not be able to convey that to people,” says Bowman.

Bowman discovered she had a knack for conveying information to others in college when fellow students would often come to her for help and again after graduation when she worked for two years as director of medical records for a psychiatric hospital.

During her time as director, the University of Tennessee HIM class toured the HIM department, and Bowman explained the department’s functions and her job in behavioral health HIM. The clarity of her explanation was one factor considered when her former teacher, Mary McCain, MPA, RHIA, department chair in the HIM program, encouraged her to apply for the new faculty position at the university.

Bowman has been teaching at the university ever since. Some of the subjects she teaches include computer courses, medical terminology, legal issues, statistics, and coding, one of her favorite subjects.

Bowman says she’s never stopped learning. “Like everybody says, you learn something best when you try to teach it to someone else,” she says. According to her, an educator has to have an intellectual interest in everything, especially in a field like HIM, which encompasses many areas.

Not every HIM professional may be cut out for teaching. According to Bowman, if you like school, you’ll probably like the academic environment. Sounds obvious, but some HIM professionals may not realize it until they’ve actually stepped into the academic arena themselves.

For those interested in making the transition from the professional world to academia, Bowman has some advice on how to get started. She suggests doing guest lectures at a program near you, talking to educators to find out what their jobs are like, taking an education class at a local school or online, or attending academic conferences such as the Assembly on Education Summer Symposium.

Many people think going into education will be less stressful, but Bowman notes that there isn’t less stress, just different stressors, like academic pressure to publish, get tenured, and recruit more students into HIM programs.

“I think I’m an educator type,” Bowman says, figuring that because she is still an educator after almost 30 years, something must be fitting right.

—Jessica Squazzo

---

**Source:**

Squazzo, Jessica. "An Educator Type." *Journal of AHIMA* 74, no.5 (May 2003): 56.

---

## Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.