

# Nursing Students' Perceptions of Academic Literacy Education – Reflections from the Swedish Red Cross University

Anna Ståhlberg  
The Swedish Red Cross University, Sweden

## Abstract

Academic literacies refer to academic writing as social practices. This study describes first-term nursing students' perceptions of the academic literacy education provided and its significance for their forthcoming training and clinical practice. Nine student nurses at the Swedish Red Cross University participated in semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed using latent content analysis. Two categories were identified: *A challenging but rewarding step* focused on the students' struggles to become academically literate. *A professional outlook* targeted the students' perceptions of the requirement to acquire academic literacies for their training and future clinical practice.

The results provide insights of dichotomous perspectives among nursing students regarding their need to acquire academic literacies. Some of the students convey a resistant and sceptical view of adding academic education to nursing training. Others acknowledge the requirement of being academically literate, a competence sometimes hard-won. However, in their struggles, teacher guidance was requested; an appeal that needs to be met with creative solutions. Repetitive approaches by teachers combined with the use of student initiatives are proposed to enable improved academic literacy levels among the students.

## Background

In studies at tertiary level, regardless of discipline, the acquisition of academic literacies is appreciated by students and lecturers alike (Borglin, 2012). Academic literacies, as described in the New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2012), refer to academic writing as social practices (Gee, 2012; Street, 2015). Aligned with this view on academic literacies, Lea and Street (2006) highlight university teachers' explicit-making of their, sometimes unspoken, expectations concerning academic writing as knowledge and writing traditions within different contexts, for instance, academic disciplines. Their view touches Wingate's (2018) description of academic literacy as students' "ability to communicate competently in an academic discourse community" (p. 2). Accordingly, students' acquisition of academic literacy comes from the embedding of subject-specific content in academic writing focused education, to enable their learning in authentic and meaningful contexts (cf Gee, 2012). This study aims to describe nursing students' perceptions of the academic literacy education provided during their first term of studying at the Swedish Red Cross University and its significance for their forthcoming training and clinical practice.

In Sweden, as in many other countries, nursing education has shifted from being solely practical training to also focus on scientific knowledge. The Swedish Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100) state goals for undergraduate education, in general, emphasising that education should be based on scholarship and proven experience. Adding to these goals, the Swedish competence description for registered nurses

states that nurses are required to be academically literate in order to enable ongoing generation and critical appraisal of scientific knowledge (Svensk sjuksköterskeförening, 2017).

From a Swedish perspective, if you have passed a high school exam, you can apply for nursing education. Accordingly, no specific previous theoretical or practical knowledge is required, although many nursing students have gained work experience in healthcare or elsewhere in the labour market, or have studied at the university prior to the start of their studies. Despite requirements to be academically literate, a large proportion of first-term nursing students, in Sweden and elsewhere, have admitted that they had not reflected on the relevance of acquiring academic knowledge during training as preparation for their forthcoming clinical practice (Smith & Caplin, 2012). These students found it difficult to gain this knowledge (Palmer et al., 2018; Smith & Caplin, 2012), although feedback, advice, and guidance were described as encouraging, contributing to improved learning and self-efficacy (Jefferies et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2018). However, some students preferred the nursing training to focus on practical and not academic skills (Jefferies et al., 2018).

Academic writing represents a key aspect within the overarching concept of academic literacy. For nurses, as for nursing students, correct written language has ramifications for patient safety. Bailey et al. (2007) describe positive outcomes for nursing students who were provided academic writing instruction early in their education. They subsequently felt at ease with their writing and improved their academic grades. Jefferies et al. (2018) address, and students agree with (Hillege et al., 2014; Palmer et al., 2018), the importance of frequent practise in order to enhance the acquisition of academic literacies, including writing.

Since 2018, the Swedish Red Cross University (SRCU) has introduced academic literacies to first-term students according to a transprofessional collaboration model initiated by Södertörn University's Department of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, library, and student support unit. The model has a two-fold aim: i) to introduce academic literacies to students, and ii) to enable lecturers to acquire useful tools for teaching academic literacies to students. After the stated three-term collaboration period, the SRCU continued to run the model independently. In short, the model consists of an individual written assignment (theoretical basic nursing) to be performed using academic writing. The students are introduced to the assignment at the beginning of the course, together with a lecture on basic theory on academic writing. After that, the students begin their writing process. After approximately two weeks, they submit a work-in-progress text and receive teacher-response. Additionally, a mandatory group-level response seminar, based on these texts, is performed and the students provide each other with peer responses. Based on all responses, the students finish their assignments and submit a final version for grading. Since the transfer of the model, its content has subsequently been developed to better fit the needs of the SRCU students. For instance, teacher-led theoretical and practice-based workshops have been added. Apart from this extensive introduction to academic literacies during their first term, the students study scientific theory and methodology in terms 2 and 4, eventually writing their bachelor thesis during their final year of training.

The transprofessional collaboration model described above has been running at Södertörn University since 2013 and has been implemented in approximately 20 programmes and disciplines, a process described by Eklund Heinonen & Sköldvall (2015) and Ståhlberg (2022). At the SRCU, although the start was a little later, many students have used the model. Therefore, there was an interest in gaining knowledge of their perspective. Hence, the aim of this study was to describe SRCU nursing students' perceptions of the academic literacy education provided during their first term and its significance for their forthcoming training and clinical practice.

## **Methods**

### ***Design***

This study adopted a descriptive, qualitative design involving data obtained by semi-structured interviews.

## Participants

Convenience sampling was used for recruiting informants. A brief description of the project and the study aim was sent out via the university's online learning management system. All students in terms 2-6 were approached, approximately 100 students per term. The inclusion criterion for the study was active participation in the academic literacy education during the first term, including having taken and passed the associated course assignment. Nine students answered the request. After having received verbal and in-depth written information concerning the study all nine students chose to continue their study participation. For detailed information regarding the informants, see Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive data of the informants.**

Sex	Female	5
	Male	3
	Other	1
Age (mean)		21–39 (30)
Number of students/study term	T3	4
	T4	1
	T5	3
	T6	1
High school programmes (clustered)	Childcare (vocational)	2
	Health and social care (vocational)	1
	Natural science-oriented	1
	Society/human-oriented	5
Time elapsed since ending high school – in years (mean)		3-20 (10)
Post high school education (not university level) <sup>1</sup>	Healthcare contexts (pharmacy technician, medical secretary, orderly)	3
	Others (arts, swim teacher, bartender, military service, guard)	5
Education at university level <sup>1</sup>	Media communication	1
	Sports	1
	Tourism	1
	Writing	1
Work experience <sup>2</sup>	Education	2
	Factory	3
	Healthcare	8
	Trade	4
	Transportation	1

<sup>1</sup> Since not all students had experience of post high school education or prior university studies, the sum does not equal the total number of study participants. <sup>2</sup> Since some students had multiple work experiences prior to the start of their studies at the SRCU, the sum is higher than the total number of informants.

## Data collection and analysis

According to the qualitative approach of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the author during the spring term of 2021 (February-April). An interview guide was used and, when needed, the interviewees were asked to elaborate on their answers using questions such as: "Could you please tell me more about that?" "How do you mean?" or "Could you give an

example?” Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted online via Zoom. The informants chose the timing for the interview and, due to being online, independently chose their whereabouts for the interview session. The interviews ranged between 33-73 minutes (mean 48), and were recorded using Zoom (sound only) and later transcribed.

To describe the narratives from the nine interviews, inductive latent content analysis was used, based on Graneheim and Lundman (2004). Initially, all transcripts were read repeatedly by the author, to allow an overview of their content to be obtained. Meaning units were identified and coded. Subsequently, the codes were tentatively, and manually, organised into sub-categories, but ‘back and forth’ movements resulted in re-organisation of the codes. Eventually, the sub-categories were consolidated into two categories *A challenging but rewarding step* and *A professional outlook*.

### **Ethical considerations**

The Swedish legislation on ethics in research involving people (SFS 2003:460) has been the guiding principle throughout this study, although no formal ethical approval was required. However, due to the involvement of students and because the researcher was a teacher who had met all informants in their academic literacy education during their first term, an advisory commentary from the ethical board was requested (dnr 2020-00138). After the students had shown an interest and been approved for study participation, they received more in-depth information about the study. Before each interview session, the information was repeated verbally. Informed consent was provided by all interview participants, and they were informed about their right to withdraw at any time. All informants were also informed about the interview being recorded. Confidentiality and anonymity have been applied to data collection, analysis and presentation of results, according to ethical principles and protocols for these kinds of studies (World Medical Association, 2018).

## **Results**

The analysis resulted in two categories: *A challenging but rewarding step* and *A professional outlook*, both presented in the text below.

### ***A challenging but rewarding step***

#### ***Being in an ambiguous position***

The informants described their *expectations of their new situation* as newly admitted students. Primarily, their narratives were driven by a *caritas* ethos: to be close to another human being, performing individual-based care. Romantic views on nursing were expressed, too. Likewise, an understanding of the nursing profession as being practical and the nursing training focusing on practical skills was emphasised. The acquisition of theoretical knowledge – anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology – was expected, but academic training was not and came as a surprise. *“I had no idea about the academic part of the training. I was shocked (laughter)”* [informant 2].

Commonly among the informants, there was a lack of *prior knowledge* of academic writing and reading and some of the informants declared a poor vocabulary. Prior to the start of their education, academic writing had not been a topic of discussion. *“It was like an entirely new world opened up”* [informant 7]. However, some informants were familiar with writing, although not academic texts, and they described how they, for example, reflected on which words to use given their potential audience. Despite not having written academically before, these students expressed familiarity with using reference systems.

From the first term onwards, the informants described themselves as having *dealt with demanding elements* regarding the academic content of the education. As a new student, to deal with all new features attached to the teaching of academic writing and reading made it hard to categorize the information and to grasp everything of importance. Some informants, especially those involved in the final year, reflected on challenges tied to what they described as “an extended amount of information”. Written information on the online learning management

system was hard to grasp, often demanding several readings. Additionally, the course literature was found to offer no help. *"I don't get anything out of that book because I don't understand what it says"* [informant 7]. Among the informants, the learning of facts – for instance, anatomy – was perceived as easy, but identifying a correct level for academic writing was tougher. Dealing with different text genres and creating a 'thread' in the text were challenging tasks. To choose words to make the text sound academic, not colloquial but not too complicated either, was another barrier; spelling and grammar were others. *"Whatever we do, our supervisors tell us that we still use an 'SMS-language', implying that our language is not scientific enough. But, hey, I don't understand how to correct the writing"* [informant 5]. Database searches were found arduous and time-consuming and when getting hits, the critical appraisal of their relevance was considered complicated, although important. Sometimes, finding any articles at all was hard: *"I get no hits. Does that mean I'm doing something wrong or are there actually no articles written within this field?"* [informant 8]. The handling of references was troublesome, but reference management could eventually be rewarding: *"Dealing with references has been an ordeal, although it has turned into something good. It feels better now when the reader can check that our statements are correct"* [informant 5].

For some informants, *being academically literate was irrelevant*. They assumed that their clinical practice would involve nursing, not research, and therefore they believed the nursing training had an inaccurate, and wasted, focus when targeting academic literacies. A mitigating circumstance from their perspective was that they had enrolled for a university education and had, accordingly, approved the academic involvement. However, as nurses, they saw no need for practising academic language as this was believed to exclude those being cared for. *"I think it's wrong. We will work with human beings. Is that not what the training emphasises? See the individual person?"* [informant 9].

#### *Requiring supervision*

The general unfamiliarity with writing academically was shown in a *need for guidance*. Teacher-provided guidance through ongoing interaction was requested to enable questions to be asked and answered in real time. In these sessions, teachers using actual text extracts showing *what* and *how* to write was much appreciated as that approach improved the understanding to a greater extent compared to the ordinary lecture format. It was preferred that the teacher-provided guidance should be adapted to the prevailing level of academic literacy among the students. *"It would ease the situation if someone could explain, preferably in simple terms, instead of demonstrating: This is the way to write from now on"* [informant 1]. Guidance on how to manage references was repeatedly requested, although some informants described how they "immersed themselves" in the reference guide while writing, describing this as an easy way to find out how to write references.

The informants emphasised the *importance of teacher feedback*. This specific feedback was described as highly reliable, compared to peer response, as teachers were believed to be knowledgeable and able to detect important details in the texts impossible for students to identify. Receiving teacher feedback could be tough at first, but after having contemplated the comments for a while they were understood as constructive, enabling further development. *"I am happy to actually get response on my assignments. It helps me to understand my 'wrong doings' and to realise if I have misunderstood the instructions"* [informant 3]. However, some informants preferred more 'tender' feedback, not focusing on incorrect passages in need of further elaboration but on what to consider for future assignments. Contradictory teacher assessments and varied levels of teacher grading were believed to complicate the learning trajectory, resulting in annoyance.

Apart from the importance of teacher guidance, the *relevance of applied teaching elements* was commented upon. The early introduction of academic studies was found rewarding as the teaching created a foundation of knowledge regarding academic language, article searches and how to handle references. Lectures were found useful and teacher-led workshops were highly rewarding. *"If that lecture had not been part of the schedule, I would not have acquired that knowledge. Well, perhaps eventually, with the help of a fellow student, but the lecture itself provided me with a profound knowledge and therefore was a good start"* [informant 7]. Individual assignments were challenging but offered good chances to improve oneself; group-related



activities – for instance, article searches followed by a comparison of results – were described as most instructive. The informants favoured the use of course literature (books) in Swedish, although reading scientific articles was helpful to improve progress in English academic language, however, at the expense of a Swedish academic language.

## **A professional outlook**

### *Learning as a process*

*Peer learning* was understood to be a valuable way of acquiring academic skills. Co-working enabled an open space for questions, joint testing and sharing of ideas. Peer response meant reviewing others' texts to provide but also receive feedback. Reading someone else's assignment gave insights into how fellow-students had tackled a task, insights that worked to give reassurance. Errors the informants believed they might have been unable to detect in their own texts could be identified by reading someone else's text. "You learnt a lot. You identified good examples from other texts, and I found that useful" [informant 5]. After having tested teacher-organised peer responses, the informants felt comfortable, at a later stage, to approach a fellow student to ask for a response. However, peer response made demands too. A high level of ambition combined with a self-perceived lack of academic knowledge resulted in feelings of failing fellow students when unable to provide a constructive response. Likewise, the informants were a little cautious about the peer response. "You have to take a peer response with a pinch of salt as you know that they are in the same position as you are" [informant 5]. Students with poor language skills, due to not being native Swedish speakers, sometimes had problems reading the text in order to respond to and provide an understandable response; a situation that could cause confusion and irritation for both parties. However, varied levels of ambition and student engagement also resulted in a mixed quality of the responses provided.

According to the informants, the *significance of repetition* was emphasised. Due to academic literacy being hard to acquire, there was a request to constantly practise academic skills so as not to risk failing to remember. Some elements were introduced early on (first term), and if not practised until the last year, for example, in a student's PM (*promemoria*) or bachelor thesis, the knowledge and skills acquired earlier were hard to remember. Continuous practise and improvement of academic skills, individually as well as in group assignments, was viewed as useful. "It would be easier if you wrote texts like this all the time. Well, that's not possible because there are so many things we need to learn. However, continuity would be preferable to avoid forgetting" [informant 4].

*Personal strategies* proved helpful. A regular reading of scientific articles, implying not only the mandatory ones, was applicable for improved understanding of academic language; English and Swedish respectively. "I believe much of my skill acquisition comes from reading, that you read academic texts and the course literature and learn how to build sentences" [informant 7]. Written assignments enabled progress in individual writing styles. Likewise, an awareness of how to write in different genres – for instance, study assignments and nursing documentation – was raised. The use of synonym dictionaries helped to mix the word use constructively. Repeated readings of one's own texts, involving critical appraisals, reading aloud, or asking a friend to read were described as beneficial for improving the quality of a written text. Informants who identified themselves as having poor language and/or writing skills found intense practise of writing as beneficial. Others preferred external courses provided by the library to improve their academic skills. When conducting article searches, the informants found it advantageous to use multiple search engines to get relevant hits. From these, search terms were identified and used in further searches. When a search got stuck, librarians were involved to guide in creative directions, although convenience sometimes became a more useful strategy: "You know what you should do, but still, you end up using Google to search for articles" [informant 4].

Among the informants, *continuous individual progress* was discerned. In the academic literacy course during the first term, their main impression was of being overwhelmed, as they were swamped with lots of new knowledge to sort and implement. However, informants in their final year reflected on having reached an understanding that the acquisition of academic skills was a process and, being such, it evolved over time. Thus, the informants had resigned themselves

to “never being finished”. Knowledge on reading and writing academically was built from one assignment to the next. Simultaneously, an understanding grew that dealing with academic writing during training would have a positive impact on their future clinical practice. The informants described their learning curve as having reached an altered understanding, illustrated by trial and error, a trying process that eventually bore fruit: “*Probably because you have improved. The teachers no longer have so much to remark upon*” [informant 4]. Gradually, tasks became easier, and patterns were easier to discern, knowledge that led to feelings of contentment: “*Now I think this is actually real fun*” [informant 2].

#### *Useful knowledge at present and for the future. Or not?*

The early introduction of the academic approach was believed to have *relevance for the training*. It established a structure for how to write academically; a structure that was understood as applicable for almost all study-related tasks. The informants expressed worries that, without that structure, their writing would have been mediocre. Having been “thrown into” the academic approach as a new student made courses focusing specifically on scientific theory and methodology more relevant and easier to assimilate. Reference use was questioned initially, but gradually the informants realised the importance of showing what text went with what source; a skill identified as crucial to avoid facing plagiarism accusations. Since the use of scientific knowledge (read: articles) was required for almost all assignments, the early onset of search practice was helpful. “*I had never realised that you need MeSH, that you need search terms to find relevant hits. Or how to know what a relevant hit is. Or how to use the little star, the truncation. I had never understood such things*” [informant 7].

Dichotomous views were aired regarding whether academic literacy was of *relevance for the future clinical practice*. Some informants believed that learning these skills while studying formed a useful basis for addressing future challenges and that academic writing, implying the use of correct language, had ramifications for all nursing documentation. The informants said that for them to question the care provided, they had to base their arguments on relevant facts and evidence. Therefore, being able to perform critical appraisals of research was identified as crucial. “*If you read a new research study, you need to be aware that those findings might not present the ‘sole truth’, that they are not set in stone*” [informant 9]. Among some informants, improved academic literacies resulted in an interest in conducting research themselves. However, other informants did not agree about the relevance of being academically literate. Although not denying the importance of constantly being aware of new insights, they questioned how much time they would have in their clinical practice to conduct searches and read articles. There was no interest in reading such literature off duty. Additionally, the relevance was questioned regarding the nurse-patient relationship. “*The information you gain from reading scientific articles, you cannot apply that when you talk to patients because they wouldn’t understand*” [informant 4]. Academic knowledge was believed to be useful for some nurses, but not for all. “*It depends on what kind of nurse you want to be, and I do not know that yet*” [informant 3].

## **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to describe the Swedish Red Cross University nursing students’ perceptions of the academic literacy education provided during their first term and its significance for their forthcoming training and clinical practice. The results of this study are not unique. Instead, they are in line with earlier research (cf. Hillege et al., 2014; Jefferies et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2018; Smith & Caplin, 2012).

The results point at two divergent student perceptions: troublesome and rewarding, respectively. Regarding the troublesome component, the acquisition of academic literacy was challenging and not what many of the newly-admitted students had expected from their training. Although Swedish nursing training adopted an academic approach 30 years ago (1993), the informants showed an understanding of their training and future profession as targeting practical, not academic, skills, a result similar to other studies focusing on nursing students (Jefferies et al., 2018; Smith & Caplin, 2012). Over this period, working life for various professions, like nursing, has gone through a transition, and scientific knowledge is, to a higher

degree, required, although practical skills and competence are still valued and needed. However, perhaps that knowledge shift, or transition, has occurred more rapidly within academia than in the general public's view. At Södertörn University, one of the programmes implementing the same academic literacy model as the SRCU is police education. Those students also viewed their training as highly practical and expressed an initial difficulty grasping the importance of an academic approach. However, gradually, they realised that the academic training had a positive impact on their learning (Sköldvall et al. 2017). This present study showed similar results with informants gradually appreciating their acquired academic literacy, viewing it as pertinent to their studies and upcoming clinical career. However, some informants persisted in arguing that nursing is a practical profession and that there is no need for academic knowledge and skills.

Nursing per se is a person/patient-centred profession, focusing on authentic encounters between people. Therefore, proven experience, including tacit knowledge, is important. However, as nursing constantly evolves, thanks to research findings, an understanding and awareness of evidence-based nursing is required. Accordingly, acquiring academic skills is a prerequisite for nursing students as well as for nurses in their professional practice.

By being academically literate, the informants realised that they could adopt a critical approach to scientific knowledge and regular care procedures performed on the ward, a skill aligned with general requirements for registered nurses (SFS 1993:100; Svensk sjuksköterskeförening, 2017). Academic writing, and the significance of correct written language for patient safety, was reflected upon, but not by all informants. Instead, the importance of correct writing was mentioned in connection to passing assignments during training. Although also relevant, nurses are obliged to document all care provided. Given this requirement, their writing forms a critical patient safety issue (Borglin, 2012; Garling, 2008) and ought to be addressed in constructive ways in education and by the students themselves.

Returning to the challenges of becoming academically literate, the informants believed that teacher-led sessions could bridge those challenges by providing room for practical exercises under supervision combined with real-time Q and As. Initially, the model implemented from Södertörn University involved a few such sessions. After the model transfer, i.e., when the model was to be run by the SRCU teachers only, focal teacher-led workshops were added to meet the requirements of this particular group of students and to improve their learning. However, doing so became a matter of resource allocation, dependent on a positive attitude at management level to give prominence to such forms of teaching. In Sweden, as in other European countries, contact hours at university level studies are rather limited (Eurostudent VI, 2018; Universitetskanslerämbetet, 2018). So, what is to be done given these limited frames for teacher-led education set against students requesting increased in-person guidance to improve their learning? Perhaps the informants, non-intentionally, provided possible solutions to that dilemma. According to these students, repetition and feedback were crucial for their learning. To do something once was not enough; twice was not enough either. Instead, they identified constant practise as a constructive way to, eventually, acquire academic skills; a view that is in line with earlier research (Bailey et al., 2007; Hillege et al., 2014; Jefferies et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2018). Drawing on this, an introduction during the first term followed by a few courses throughout the training will not suffice. If instead academic skills were prioritised throughout the entire nursing programme, all teachers and subjects could contribute, working fully to embed academic literacy training into subject-specific courses. Aligned with the topic of the specific course, focus could be on various elements relevant to academic skill acquisition: writing, searching for, appraising, reading, and referencing (Gee, 2012; Lea & Street, 2006).

The suggestions listed above are examples of how *teaching* could be performed to, quite easily, enable ongoing academic literacy training. Another possible path to follow, or rather to use in combination with altered teaching elements, could be to pay attention to the *students' own appetite for learning*. The results showed several examples of how students themselves identified strategies for practising and acquiring relevant skills. This paper holds an academic focus, although this appetite for learning, from a general perspective, indicates that the students have developed a readiness for action, a most valuable and needed resource as a registered nurse (SFS 1993:100). One strategy mentioned by the informants was their use of peer response, initially introduced as a mandatory element in the course curriculum. Within nursing



there is an extensive body of research showing positive outcomes of peer learning in clinical practice: personal and professional development combined with improved self-efficacy (cf. Abdullah & Chan, 2018; Pålsson et al., 2017; Ravanipour et al., 2015). Not so much is known about peer learning among nursing students in theoretical contexts. However, according to the informants, the providing and receiving of peer response had a positive impact on their learning and worked reassuringly, indicating improved self-efficacy. Given this, implementation of peer learning in theoretical courses could transfer parts of the teaching from the teachers to the students themselves, during studying and in clinical practice respectively.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses***

To enhance the trustworthiness of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), an effort was made to achieve variations in the sample by inviting all students (T2-T6) who had completed the academic education during their first term of training. All terms but one (T2) were represented. Out of many students, nine showed an interest in study participation. Despite the limited number of informants, each student contributed thick descriptions of their perceptions on the academic education they had been provided. One methodological limitation to this study was that the author performed the analysis single-handed and, due to being one of the teachers in the academic literacy education, pre-understanding could have interfered the analysis process. However, the trustworthiness of the analysis is strengthened by the codes being explicitly presented in the text and by the text being illustrated with descriptive quotes. Ethical considerations were made since the author/interviewer had met all informants as a teacher, including grading of their assignments. However, the grading was done long before study's start. All informants were perceived to reply truthfully to the interview questions, sharing positive and negative perceptions respectively.

### **Conclusion**

This study has shown that Swedish nursing students, 30 years after the academisation of nursing training, still view their future profession as practical-based. Thus, they dispute, and sometimes even resist accepting, the relevance of adding academic education to nursing training. Academic skills are described as hard to acquire and for advantageous learning, students request teacher presence and ongoing repetition and feedback. However, in reality such education elements cannot be offered, at least not in ways and to the extent the students prefer. Therefore, alternative, and creative, teaching methods are required. Cooperative and repetitive approaches among both teachers and students, including the students' own driving forces to learn, could positively contribute to a change in students' views on academic skills and, eventually, to better outcomes, both during training and in their upcoming clinical carrier. Future work might focus on constructive methods of performing academic literacy training, for instance, targeting peer learning in theoretical courses, including the scientific method, but also in courses such as autonomy, physiology, and pharmacology.

## References

- Abdullah, K. L., & Chan, C. M. (2018). A systematic review of qualitative studies exploring peer learning experiences of undergraduate nursing students. *Nurse Education Today*, 71, 185-192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2018.09.018>
- Bailey, P., Derbyshire, J., Harding, A., Middleton, A., Rayson, K., & Syson, L. (2007). Assessing the impact of a study skills programme on the academic development of nursing diploma students at Northumbria University, UK. *Health Information and Libraries Information*, 24(s1), 77-85. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2007.00741.x>
- Borglin, G. (2012). Promoting critical thinking and academic writing skills in nurse education. *Nurse Education Today*, 32(5), 611-613. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2011.06.009>
- Eklund Heinonen, M., & Sköldvall, K. (2015). Nu har vi ett gemensamt språk- om ämnesintegrerad undervisning i akademiskt skrivande [In Swedish]. *Högre utbildning*, 5(2), 133-138.
- Eurostudent VI. (2018). *Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe 2016-2018*. [https://www.eurostudent.eu/download\\_files/documents/EUROSTUDENT\\_VI\\_Synopsi\\_s\\_of\\_Indicators.pdf](https://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EUROSTUDENT_VI_Synopsi_s_of_Indicators.pdf)
- Garling, P. (2008). *Final Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals*. <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/resources/special-commissions-of-inquiry/acute-care-services>
- Gee, J. P. (2012). *Social linguistics and literacies – ideology in discourses*. Routledge.
- Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(2), 105-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2003.10.001>
- Hillege, S. P., Catterall, J., Beale, B. L., & Stewart, L. (2014). Discipline matters: Embedding academic literacies into an undergraduate nursing program. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 14(6), 686-691. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2014.09.005>
- Jefferies, D., McNally, S., Roberts, K., Wallace, A., Stunden, A., D'Souza, S., & Glew, P. J. (2018). The importance of academic literacy for undergraduate nursing students and its relationship to future professional clinical practice: A systematic review. *Nurse Education Today*, 60, 84-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2017.09.020>
- Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (2006). The Academic Literacies Model: Theory and Application. *Theory Into Practice*, 45(4), 368-377. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4504\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4504_11)
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Palmer, L., Levett-Jones, T., & Smith, R. (2018). First year students' perceptions of academic literacies preparedness and embedded diagnostic assessment. *Student Success*, 9(2), 49-61. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v9i2.417>
- Pålsson, Y., Mårtensson, G., Leo Svenne, C., Ädel, E., & Engström, M. (2017). A peer learning intervention for nursing students in clinical practice <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2017.01.011>
- Ravanipour, M., Bahreini, M., & Ravanipour, M. (2015). Exploring nursing students' experience of peer learning in clinical practice. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 4, 1-7.
- SFS 1992:1434. *The Higher Education Act*. [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/hogskolelag-19921434\\_sfs-1992-1434/](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/hogskolelag-19921434_sfs-1992-1434/)

- SFS 1993:100. *The Higher Education Ordinance*. [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/hogskoleforordning-1993100\\_sfs-1993-100/](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/hogskoleforordning-1993100_sfs-1993-100/)
- SFS 2003:460. *Lag om etikprövning av forskning som avser människor*. [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-om-etikprovning-av-forskning-som\\_sfs-2003-460/](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-om-etikprovning-av-forskning-som_sfs-2003-460/)
- Sköldvall, K., Rising, C., & Danielsson, M. (2017). "Får man säga att det känns hopplöst?": polisstudenter möter det akademiska skrivandet [In Swedish]. In A. Malmbjer (Ed.), *Studenters skrivande i humaniora och samhällsvetenskap*. Södertörns högskola.
- Smith, Y. M., & Caplin, M. (2012). Teaching the literacy of professionalism: when clinical skills are not enough. *Nurse Educator*, 37(3), 121-125. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NNE.0b013e3182504188>
- Stålberg, A. (2022). Academic writing among first-term students in the nursing programme at the Swedish Red Cross University College – A description of a three-term trans professional project in collaboration with the library and the student support unit at Södertörn University. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 12(1), 41-48. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v12n1p41>
- Street, B. V. (2015). Academic writing: theory and practice. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 1(2), 110-116. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jei.v1i2.8314>
- Svensk sjuksköterskeförening. (2017). *Kompetensbeskrivning för sjuksköterska [Competence description for registered nurses]*. <https://swenurse.se/download/18.5b9522411887c8d873d5c38a/1686557116681/Kompetensbeskrivning%20legitimerad%20sjuksköterska.pdf>
- Universitetskanslerämbetet. (2018). *Lärlarledd tid i den svenska högskolan. En studie av scheman*. <https://gamla.uka.se/download/18.5817b17f16658cb9f755017/1540904435998/rapport-2018-lararledd-tid-i-den-svenska-hogskolan.pdf>
- Wingate, U. (2018). Academic literacy across the curriculum: Towards a collaborative instructional approach. *Language Teaching*, 51(3): 349-364. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444816000264>
- World Medical Association. (2018). *The Helsinki Declaration*. <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/>