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Professional collaboration in higher education to support academic writing: Benefits and challenges

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Abstract

At Södertörn University, Sweden, a collaboration model has been developed from the theory of academic literacies, aiming to support students' writing development. In this innovative way of working, university librarians and writing teachers collaborate with lecturers to integrate a teaching element on academic writing (including searching for, appraising, reading, and writing texts) into existing university courses. In this article, we describe and discuss our experiences of implementing this model in nursing education. We observed that the collaboration made it possible for all professionals to share their knowledge, both in a theoretical and practical sense. Among other things, the lecturers appropriated several linguistic tools which they were able to use in their continued teaching of academic writing. However, challenges regarding the collegial sharing of knowledge were also experienced. If the lessons learned are to be implemented in the organisation, both resources and a mandate from the management are essential.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a recurring discussion among university teachers (henceforth lecturers) in Swedish higher education about students' writing difficulties (e.g., Garberding, 2019; Widén, 2020). These difficulties concern not only writing at an academic level, such as paraphrasing and referencing correctly, but also writing acceptably: for example, regarding correct sentence structure and spelling (Norberg Brorsson & Ekberg, 2012). Writing difficulties among students is also a well-known phenomenon internationally, at both undergraduate and graduate levels (Huerta et al., 2017). To improve students' writing development, it is important to strengthen their self-confidence by giving them the opportunity to learn how to write (Mascle, 2013). However, this leads to frustration among many lecturers who lack the time and confidence (Bailey, 2010) and/or the linguistic tools to support students in their writing (Norberg Brorsson & Ekberg, 2012). In the debate among Swedish lecturers, writing difficulties are sometimes described as shortcomings of the students, due to inadequate previous schooling or as being related to the simplified language used in social media and other digital channels. As argued by Lea and Street (2006), a deficiency perspective on students' writing is not enough. It is valuable to approach the issue from an academic literacies' perspective: that is, focus on what lecturers can do to support students in gaining access to how knowledge and writing is understood and practiced in their specific academic discipline (Lea & Street, 2006). In our view, academic writing not only concerns writing but also searching for, appraising, and reading academic texts. In consideration of this, we would also like to emphasise – for the sake of students' academic literacy acquisition – the value of professional collaboration in higher education.

The purpose of this article is to describe a model for collaborating across professions in higher education to support students' academic writing, as well as discuss the benefits and challenges related to this collaboration.

We base our reasoning on an innovative model from Södertörn University, at Campus Flemingsberg south of Stockholm, in which lecturers collaborate with librarians and writing teachers to support students' academic writing. During the collaboration, the lecturers are provided with relevant tools for continued teaching of academic writing without the direct support of librarians and writing teachers. Based on the implementation of this model within the nursing education programme at The Swedish Red Cross University, which is also located at Campus Flemingsberg, we particularly highlight the importance of common linguistic tools for collegial learning.

This article is not the result of a systematic empirical study. Instead, it is based primarily on reflection upon our own experiences as participants in the collaboration.[1] Added to that are the experiences of one of the authors who, as a lecturer, continued teaching academic writing independently after the collaboration. We have also examined written evaluations and meeting notes from the collaboration, as well as considered conversations we had with other participants at that time. We believe that our experiences can be relevant for other professionals in higher education, also in an international context.

Academic writing, collegial learning, and collaboration

We depart from the theory of academic literacies (Lea & Street, 2006), in which academic writing is seen as social practices that are part of academic sense-making on a larger scale. Instead of starting from a deficiency perspective on students' writing, our focus is on making explicit the lecturers' tacit knowledge and unspoken expectations concerning academic writing. This is connected to views on knowledge and writing traditions within different contexts, such as academic disciplines (Lea & Street, 2006). Therefore, academic writing does not involve general skills that can be taught separately from the academic subject in question. Instead, the teaching of academic writing needs to be integrated into existing courses to give students the opportunity to learn in an authentic and meaningful context (cf. Gee, 2012). In our view, a collaboration between lecturers and other professionals in higher education – such as writing teachers and librarians – may also be required (e.g., Pham & Tanner, 2014). If such elements are missing, the teaching of academic literacies might fail or may not have the desired outcome (Wingate, 2012). However, a collaboration can also present challenges, as addressed by Pham and Tanner (2014) and Nguyen and Tuamsuk (2018), among others. They describe how the interaction between lecturers and librarians can be affected by factors such as structural, socio-cultural, and technological aspects. Trust, mutual respect, and effective communication are required to meet across professional identities. Close relationships require time and resources, which are rarely available.

Collaboration between lecturers and librarians can be described as a 'trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in *shared thinking, shared planning and shared creation of integrated instruction'* (Montiel-Overall, 2005, p.5). Collaboration is therefore understood as something more profound than simply consulting another professional from time to time. In our view, collaboration also transcends the definition of an interprofessional team where there is joint planning, tight communication, shared responsibilities, and collective decisions (Lenéer-Axelsson & Thylefors, 2018). Our understanding of collaboration aligns with what Lenéer-Axelsson and Thylefors (2018) describe as a transprofessional team, namely a coordinated work process where the roles of different professionals can transcend one another. We believe that a focus on joint collegial learning can facilitate transprofessional collaboration. In the Swedish school

[1] At the time of the collaboration, one author (AS) was working as a lecturer at the Swedish Red Cross University. The other author (TL) participated in the collaboration as a librarian and pedagogical coordinator at Södertörn University Library.

system, collegial learning has been well researched. Åsén Nordström (2017) describes this concept as structured competence development in which lecturers develop knowledge together and thereby feel less alone in their work. Collegial learning in Swedish higher education is less explored. However, one example from Stockholm University shows that collegial support – in the form of auscultations, response, and conversations – was beneficial. The participants found it meaningful and instructive to engage in joint reflection on the lecturer's role, teaching, and the students' learning. Collegial learning can thus contribute to the development of academic teaching (Wennerberg et al., 2019).

Based on Lev Vygotsky, among others, the Swedish psychologist Roger Säljö (2000) has developed a socio-cultural theory in which learning takes place in interaction and communication with other people. Here, the use and appropriation of various tools plays a central role in learning, involving both linguistic and intellectual tools: that is, spoken and written language and physical tools such as books and computers. These tools are not neutral: having emerged in different contexts, they mediate certain perspectives on the world (Säljö, 2000). With regard to academic writing, the lecturer's awareness and mastery of various linguistic tools is central to explaining to students what they need to develop in their texts. Some examples of linguistic tools are concepts such as core sentences, metatext and connecting words. These tools are not only important for language teachers but for all lecturers, as language plays an important part in clarifying the content of an academic course (Norberg Brorsson & Ekberg, 2012). According to Längsjö (1996, see Johansson & Halvarsson, 2019), it is necessary to make lecturers' tacit knowledge explicit to achieve collegial learning in the classroom. The knowledge needs to be defined and connected to concepts to make it concrete and comprehensible.

A collaboration model to develop students' academic writing

At Södertörn University, the model 'Introduction to academic writing' has been developed to support students' academic literacy acquisition through collegial learning. The model was initially designed in 2013 as a response to an assessment, made by the Swedish Higher Education Authority,[2] stipulating that some education programmes at Södertörn University were of insufficient quality. For instance, a selection of bachelor theses was found to be lacking sufficient theoretical grounding and scholarly sources. Additionally, the students' academic writing skills were poor. The Development Unit for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education[3] (henceforth the Development Unit) at Södertörn University was consulted to develop the teaching of academic writing to improve student outcome. This request was deemed to be of importance, not least because Södertörn University has a specific mission to achieve widening participation and therefore offers students support in academic writing (Bohlin & Ågren 2020). The Development Unit invited the university's Study Support Unit[4] and the University Library[5] to start a collaborative development project on student writing. The lecturers were also viewed as central partners in reaching a comprehensive understanding of the students' writing development. One important point of departure was to develop support integrated into existing programme-specific courses instead of offering separate writing courses (cf. Lea & Street, 2006).

[2] The Swedish Higher Education Authority is a regulatory authority that regularly evaluates the quality of higher education programmes in Sweden, among other things.
[3] The Development Unit at Södertörn University aims to develop the quality of the university's teaching and learning. For example, it offers courses, workshops and tutoring for lecturers who want to work in pedagogical development.
[4] The Study Support Unit at Södertörn University works in various ways to support students' language and writing development – for example, through courses and tutoring in academic writing and speaking.
[5] The Södertörn University Library offers, among other things, courses and tutoring in searching for, appraising, and referencing scholarly sources.

The model has three phases: pre-phase, execution phase and transition phase (see Figure 1. A comprehensive description of the model is published as an appendix).

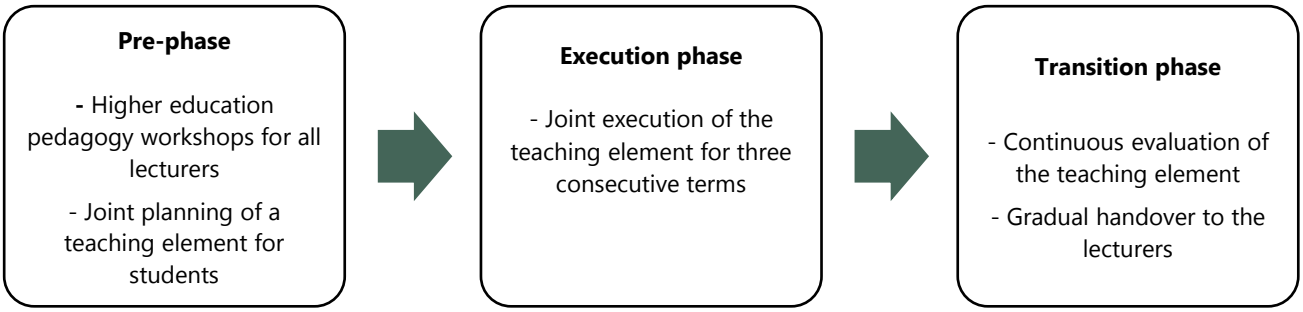

Figure 1. An overview of the model from Södertörn University for collaborating across professions in higher education to support students' academic writing.

During the pre-phase, all lecturers within a programme or subject are introduced to the model through two higher education pedagogy workshops, and the planning between the participating professionals begins. In the execution phase, the real professional collaboration takes place. In this phase, the teaching element of the model is implemented, following a predetermined sequence, and is integrated into a programme-specific course for first-term students. First, an introductory lecture on academic writing is given, followed by a seminar after about two weeks. In between, the students conduct an article search and start on a written assignment. A central part of the teaching element is the formative response provided by peers and teachers on a first draft of the written assignment (for a more detailed description of the response template, see Table 2). Based on the written response, combined with a verbal response provided at the seminar, the students finish their assignments, and the final version is graded. This collaborative way of working runs for a three-term period. After that, the transition phase starts, which means that the model is transferred to the university programme or subject in question with the intention that the participating lecturers keep teaching academic writing in a similar way. Although the purpose of the model is to introduce new students to academic writing, the collegial collaboration provides lecturers with relevant tools so that after the transition they can continue teaching academic writing without the direct support of librarians and writing teachers.

So far, around 20 programmes and subjects at Södertörn University have been introduced to the collaboration model. Some of these collaborations have been described in previous studies. In most cases, the model has been completed and the lecturers involved have been satisfied. Some studies show that the students believe they have learned more about referencing, but also about information seeking and writing self-supporting texts with a clear structure. Peer response is highlighted as valuable by the students, particularly reviewing and providing response to other students' texts (Hjalmarsson et al., 2017). The participating lecturers also think that the students' texts are generally of good quality (Eklund Heinonen & Sköldvall, 2015; Sköldvall et al., 2017), even if the students do not always succeed in transferring the knowledge to subsequent courses during their education (Eklund Heinonen & Sköldvall, 2015). However, after the transition phase some challenges have arisen. As shown by Söderlundh et al. (2017), many lecturers have experienced difficulties – for example, due to lack of time, confidence, or low interest among their colleagues. Thus, it may be concluded that a higher educational pedagogical perspective is central for this model to be sustainable (Eklund Heinonen & Jorum, 2014; Eklund

Heinonen & Sköldvall, 2015). To provide continuity for students regarding their literacy development, *all* lecturers within a programme or subject need to have access to the same knowledge and tools, not only those who have participated in the collaboration. Söderlundh et al. (2017) show that it is crucial for lecturers to have a mandate and commitment to integrate the teaching element and make it their own: for example, by redesigning the course and involving their colleagues in this development process.

None of the above-mentioned studies has so far focused on competence development for the lecturers, but several examples can be seen of how the collegial collaboration and learning have played a part in the success and sustainability of the model. In the rest of this article, we will focus on the implementation of 'Introduction to academic writing' in the nursing education programme at the Swedish Red Cross University and its implications for the lecturers' learning about teaching academic writing to students. We are particularly interested in collegial learning related to the explicit making and sharing between professionals of linguistic tools related to academic writing.

Nursing education in Sweden and at the Swedish Red Cross University

Traditionally, nursing education in Sweden has had a practical focus. However, 30 years ago, beginning in 1993, nursing education became an academic education, involving a three-year training programme ending with a professional (registered nurse) and an academic (bachelor of caring science) diploma. The academisation process has put focus on nursing students' academic literacy acquisition, and challenges have arisen, as nursing students, in line with students in other practical professions, do not always acknowledge the importance, or value, of being academically literate (Jefferies et al., 2018; Palmer, Levett-Jones, & Smith, 2018; Smith & Caplin, 2012). Other challenges encountered in Swedish nursing education derive from large student groups and a curriculum focusing on group assignments and examinations, leaving insufficient room for individual reflection and writing, which are needed for academic literacy acquisition. Additionally, in the period following the academisation process, nursing colleges in Sweden stimulated widening participation, resulting in changed spectra of student groups (Borglin & Fagerström, 2012). Students for whom Swedish is a second language entail yet another challenge for learning the 'academic language', although the acquisition of academic literacies has also proved to be demanding for students for whom Swedish is their mother tongue.

The Swedish Red Cross University (henceforth SRCU) was the first secular nursing educational establishment in Sweden. The former Red Cross School of Nursing was founded in 1866 by Emmy Rappe, a noblewoman who was trained as a nurse by Florence Nightingale at St. Thomas' hospital in London (Swedish biographical dictionary, 2022). Today, the SRCU is one of Sweden's leading educators in nursing at both undergraduate and advanced levels. Initially, the nursing education was only offered to women, but during recent years widening participation at the SRCU has resulted in a heterogeneous student group in terms of sex and also age, prior studying and/or work life experience, and ethnicity. This heterogeneity grew even stronger in conjunction with the SRCU moving from the centre of Stockholm to the southern outskirts of the city, namely Campus Flemingsberg, and with the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in new groups of people applying for university studies.

The implementation of the model at the SCRU and its results

The collaboration model was first introduced at the SCRU in the spring term of 2018. According to the model, all lecturers at the SRCU were, prior to the implementation, invited to workshops in higher education pedagogy, which aimed to optimise overall collegial learning and to increase the general interest and legitimacy of the

model-based way of working. However, only a small number of lecturers were engaged in the actual three-term model implementation (henceforth the SRCU lecturers). Before the implementation started, the SRCU lecturers, together with the librarians and writing teachers from Södertörn University, designed the assignment, teaching material, and the response template. Likewise, assessments and aspects of student progression were discussed. During this phase, the SRCU lecturers were introduced to a set of central concepts used in academic literacy teaching (some are presented in Table 1). These concepts, deriving from the professional practice of librarians and writing teachers, aimed to make fundamental parts of academic writing explicit for the SRCU lecturers and, eventually, the students.

Table 1. Some central concepts in the teaching of academic writing, applicable regardless of subject/programme.

Concept	Definition/explanation
Self-supporting text	A text that can be understood by the reader without having prior knowledge of the assignment or the subject. Students often fail to direct their text to a potential reader and instead, incorrectly, address the text to their teacher.
IMRaD structure	The structure most academic texts follow. It is useful for students to recognise this structure as it can guide them both in reading and writing their own academic texts.
'Voices' in the text	Academic texts often involve several 'voices', e.g., referenced sources, and the voice of the author him/herself.
Abstract marker	A signal to the reader that a reference is used, e.g., a clarification whose voice is used in the text. For example: '*According to* Stålberg (2021) …' or 'As *investigated by* Pettersson (2018) …'
Peer reviewed article	A signature of academic writing. It can be helpful to address certain structural aspects, such as the peer review process before publication, to improve students' identification of peer reviewed articles and other scholarly sources.
Search terms	The search for scholarly sources is inherent in the academic writing process. By identifying key concepts, including synonyms, and subject headings – all forming the search terms – database searches can be conducted to identify relevant scientific sources.

When implemented, the model was directed at first-term students studying a course that introduced nursing theories and concepts. During the teaching sessions, writing teachers, librarians, and SRCU lecturers met the students together. Each professional was responsible for different parts, although them being closely intertwined. The writing teachers focused on the actual text: its structure, the language per se and the language style; the librarians were responsible for information-seeking and referencing; and the SRCU lecturers addressed the subject-specific content of the course and assignment. The joint teaching sessions enabled all professionals to identify the teaching styles of the others and how they answered questions from the students.

A formative response to the students' draft of their assignments was provided, separately but in the same template, by all three professional groups (see Table 2). This joint use of the response template allowed everyone to see each other's comments, enabling the professionals to learn how concepts, such as those mentioned in Table 1, were used in practice.

Table 2. The response template including content descriptions and authentic (but translated) comments provided to a first-term student at the SRCU.

Criteria	Content descriptions	Comments to the student
Self-supporting text	The text is self-supporting, i.e. the reader can understand the text without prior knowledge of the assignment or without having read the sources used. The text has a correct title in relation to the content of the text.	Your text is self-supporting, and your choice of title is OK. However, the text needs further elaborations.
Background	The text is concise (approx. 150 words) and addresses important aspects in relation to the aim. The text involves at least three *different* sources from the mandatory course literature.	Central concepts related to the aim are identified and described in the text. Consider how you can clarify the description of the practical nursing being performed.
Aim and method	The aim of the text is clarified. The method section (approx. 100 words) addresses the search strategy briefly, including search term and limitations. Additionally, the text describes how the articles have been analysed. Appendix (three) is attached, showing a detailed description of the chosen search terms, choice of articles (at least four) and their central content. The chosen articles (empirical studies or reviews) follow the IMRaD structure.	The search terms you use need to address the central concepts of the aim – reconsider the search terms you use. Try to write your search strategy as a running text. To analyse the articles, you need to read their results sections even if it is recommended that you read the entire article.
Result	The result answers the aim and is presented in a logical and perspicuous way. The text involves only the analysed articles and no other references (approx. 100 words).	Use your aim as 'glasses' when you read the chosen articles. What do they tell you that relates to your aim? Compile that information in the result text; do not just summarise each article. Appendix: use the same approach in your chosen article as you did for articles 1-3, i.e., identify the different parts in the text. For instance, you are not supposed to note the aim of the assignment in the box marked "Aim", but the aim of your chosen article.
Discussion	The discussion answers the aim and involves a discussion of the result, supported by the background, course literature and scientific articles (approx. 200 words).	What can you read from your result? Which similarities/differences can you identify related to what you have written in the background section? Try to discuss methodological considerations as well.
Conclusion	The conclusion answers the aim and summarises the main message of the text. No references attached (approx. 50 words).	Delay writing your conclusion until you have revised the results and discussion sections.
Language and style	The text uses an academic style, e.g., it lacks subjective opinions. The language adheres to the norms of written language. Word count: 500-600 words.	Your written language is good.
'Voices' and abstract markers	It is clear whose 'voice' is heard in the text. Abstract markers are used.	It is clear who says what and you use abstract markers – good.
References	Referencing is used according to the university's APA style guide. References are mainly correct.	The text involves references. Remember to use & within parentheses and 'and' in the running text. I did not find a reference in the reference list corresponding to

		(Ehrenberg, Wallin & Edberg, 2016). Do not forget to note all authors: for example, von Strauss. Proofread your text and make sure you use correct years. It is not correct to write 'In SSF /…/ is described'. Who is doing something? Formulate instead: 'SSF describes in its journal that…' or (in the next sentence) 'The Swedish Nursing Association describes competence…' Otherwise, correct referencing – well done!
Reference list	The reference list follows the university's APA style guide. The reference list is mainly correct, for example it is written in alphabetical order and italic text is used correctly.	The reference list is mainly correct. However, make sure to write the journal name in italics when using a journal article. Use the APA guide 4.13. Reference to Ehrenberg… is missing in the reference list. The references are written in alphabetical order – good.

During the three-term model implementation, the teaching sessions were continuously evaluated. At the end of each term, the participating professionals held follow-up meetings in which the teaching element and student outcomes were discussed. The evaluations showed, among other things, that the SRCU lecturers perceived that the professional collaboration positively influenced their work performance. For them, being able to observe the perspectives and expertise of other professionals while teaching worked reassuringly and contributed to them building a constructive foundation for their forthcoming teaching of academic writing. Another positive outcome was that the lecturers had become aware of differences in writing traditions in their own subject compared to others. The concepts introduced by librarians and writing teachers (see Table 1) were not unfamiliar, but the practical use of them in teaching sessions provided the SRCU lecturers with new and important tools to use when teaching and also when providing response and assessing student assignments. Likewise, being involved in the teaching of information seeking gave them improved understanding and practical knowledge. These outcomes were anticipated, and highly valued. However, the continuous evaluations indicated that it was not only the SRCU lecturers who perceived improved collegial learning. A more unexpected yet natural outcome was the learning evolving between librarians and writing teachers. Some of the librarians said that not only had they learnt more about academic reading and writing, but they had also become more aware of librarians' specific professional knowledge and felt more secure in their pedagogical role. Some of the writing teachers, who otherwise worked as lecturers in different subjects, said that they had realised their responsibility for teaching students not only reading and writing but also information seeking. Additionally, both librarians and writing teachers said they had gained new insights from the SRCU lecturers as well, such as what is expected of nursing students when it comes to writing academic texts and searching for scholarly articles. In summary, all parties involved regarded the professional collaboration as rewarding and a fun way of working, which included gaining more colleagues with new perspectives and ideas.

After the stipulated three-term period, the professional collaboration was ended. The SRCU lecturers were then to administer the teaching of academic writing without collegial involvement. Since the transition, a continuous development of the content of the teaching element has been undertaken to better suit the identified needs among the nursing students at the SRCU, students who were perceived as ambitious but in need of extensive support and guidance (Stålberg, 2022). Thanks to these further developments, teaching focusing on nursing theories and concepts has increased, and the parts addressing academic writing have been strengthened by adding more teaching topics on various themes compared to the initial teaching element. The formative response was believed to work well and was therefore kept in its original form, as it was perceived to provide

good opportunities to address and clarify both strengths and parts in need of improvement in the student assignments.

Discussion

Working across professional boundaries in higher education contributes to a shared understanding of how students' academic literacy acquisition could be integrated into subject-specific teaching. Based on that shared understanding, lecturers are put in a position of responsibility regarding the support of students' academic writing – a position that has been questioned by many, not least in the Swedish debate. However, as described by Norberg Brorsson and Ekberg (2012), lecturers have a unique, often implicit, knowledge of the writing culture of their subject. But, on the basis of that knowledge, can it be expected that lecturers are experts on all aspects of academic writing, such as information-seeking, appraising, reading, and writing academic texts? We do not believe so, and instead we would like to emphasise the value of a professional collaboration (cf. Bailey, 2018; Nguyen & Tuamsuk, 2018; Pham & Tanner, 2014; Wingate, 2012). While writing teachers specialise in teaching writing-related rules and norms, such as spelling and sentence construction, librarians have a fundamental knowledge of, among other things, search techniques and databases. This professional knowledge is acquired in their profession-specific work. Lecturers in higher education have another role, but by collaborating with writing teachers and librarians, these lecturers can, as described above, gain access to knowledge, experience, and linguistic tools.

Thanks to the professional collaboration, the SRCU lecturers participating in the model implementation have had unique opportunities to test in practice essential parts of the teaching of academic writing in nursing education: for example, clarifying the specific expectations of students' academic texts, such as following the IMRaD structure, being self-supporting and using correct referencing, as well as addressing nursing-specific themes. Additionally, the SRCU lecturers were given an opportunity to use and appropriate several linguistic tools from the professional practice of the writing teachers and librarians (cf. Säljö, 2000). Tools such as self-supporting texts and voices in the text have proved to be of particular importance, as they explicitly formulate what was formerly only implicit knowledge among the SRCU lecturers. Linguistic tools seem to contribute to students' and lecturers' communication and learning – they have found a 'shared language' (cf. Eklund Heinonen & Sköldvall, 2015). But is that shared language sufficient for students' academic literacy acquisition? No. We argue that institutional, collegial, as well as organisational factors are of importance too.

After the transition, when a subject or programme is to run the teaching element on their own, there is a need to involve all lecturers from the subject/programme, regardless of their teaching focus. The offer of an introduction to, and the practice of, academic writing early on in higher education is valuable for all students, and according to Gee (2012) students' acquisition of academic literacies benefits from teaching taking place in a functional, and academic, context. However, as argued by Norberg Brorsson and Ekberg (2012), a kick start to academic writing is not enough: continuous training is required. Without it, sustainability and student progression cannot be achieved. Yet many lecturers in higher education express a lack of knowledge about how to provide proficient teaching in academic writing. This is an issue of special interest within practical profession educations, such as nursing education, in which academic writing has traditionally not been emphasised. One possible strategy to provide increased, and improved, knowledge, based on the experiences described in this article, could be a professional collaborative way of working to improve collegial learning and to achieve course development. Consensus and a shared knowledge base are beneficial, as they streamline the teaching sessions. Some proven ways of working to achieve this are joint planning, teaching, and response provision. However,

such work requires resources, mainly time and staffing, and a management mandate (cf. Söderlundh et al., 2017), but, as emphasised by Åsén Nordström (2017), much can be gained from collegial learning in teaching development. From an SRCU perspective, a potential positive result deriving from such teaching development could be the strengthening of students' knowledge of academic writing combined with increased knowledge in nursing. Another way to strengthen students' academic writing could be to increase the number of individual assignments at the expense of group tasks, a switch that would demand a radically changed structure of the present syllabus. From the teacher's perspective, it is probable that these measures will initially cause a higher workload, but that they will, eventually, be beneficial.

The explicit aim of the collaboration model was to strengthen the lecturers' abilities to teach academic writing as an integrated part of the subject teaching, which has been addressed in this article. However, while implementing the model, there have also been indications that tri-directional learning has occurred, including the librarians and writing teachers. In this way, one could view the collaboration described here as transprofessional (cf. Lenéer Axelsson & Thylefors, 2018). In this article, we cannot establish what all the participating professionals have learned or to what extent what they have learned derives from this collaboration. It could be argued that what they learned could have been learned elsewhere. However, the evaluations described above indicate some learning effects of collaborating across professions. This is promising, as not only lecturers but also librarians and writing teachers struggle with supporting students' academic literacy acquisition, although in different ways. It would be of interest to further examine the professional learning from this collaboration and in what way, if any, it has affected the different professionals' further work in their own areas.

This article has focused on collegial collaboration and learning in higher education. Although not the focus of this article, the nursing students and their acquisition of academic literacies have had an important, albeit an understated, role in the descriptions presented above. Thus, in conclusion we would like to add that in a contemporary healthcare context it is crucial for nurses to be academically literate to enable them to adopt new research insights and appraise the quality of new findings. Of similar importance is the ability, when or if needed, to reject such knowledge. However, due to nursing having been practical work for an extensive period, educators face a considerable challenge: nursing students do not realise the relevance of gaining academic literacy skills (Stålberg, submitted), an attitude also found among students in other practical professions (Jefferies et al., 2018; Sköldvall et al., 2017; Smith & Caplin, 2012). Related to that, and to encourage and support students' development of academic literacies, a professional, preferably continuous, collaboration as described in this article could be beneficial. Based on the area of the competence of each professional group, the students could be inspired, encouraged, and challenged in various ways to reach insights regarding the importance of them becoming academically literate.

Conclusion

Based on the theory of academic literacies, a model for collegial collaboration aiming to offer students subject-integrated support regarding academic writing was developed at Södertörn University outside Stockholm, Sweden. Earlier research at Södertörn University focused on the model's positive influence on students' academic literacy acquisition. In this article, based on the model implementation at the SRCU, we have targeted the SRCU lecturers' perspectives and investigated their collaboration with writing teachers and librarians in terms of collegial learning. Likewise, this article has focused on the linguistic tools related to academic writing that were adopted by the SRCU lecturers.

In summary, this article has reported encouraging results regarding a professional collaboration in teaching academic literacies in higher education. There has been an emphasis on collegial learning, especially the learning of the SRCU lecturers. Their learning is essential to provide a sustainable teaching element within nursing education. However, the collaboration described has also provided tri-directional learning. The collaboration resulting in both shared and transferred knowledge must be viewed as a success factor within third cycle education. However, despite the positive outcomes of this collaboration, it is also necessary to put a spotlight on the obstacles identified. To achieve beneficial collegial *and* student learning, as well as a sustainable way of teaching, adequate prerequisites are needed. Management understanding and approval is of paramount importance, as this way of working demands resources such as manpower and time. Additionally, to improve student academic literacy, curriculum changes might be needed to ensure that an academic mindset exists in all courses – and among all lecturers – throughout a programme. Likewise, there is a need to replace some collective, group-level assignments with individual performance.

Finally, is it possible to implement the model for collaboration described here at other universities? We believe so. Previous collaborations with different academic subjects and programmes at Södertörn University have already shown that the model, while providing a framework to start from, is flexible enough to adjust to the needs of the subject or programme in question: for example, how the teaching element is designed (the type of writing and searching assignment must be aligned with the course's learning outcomes, etc.). The collaboration described here between Södertörn University and the SRCU also shows that the model can be implemented across university boundaries. Regardless of the academic discipline or university, students will continue to struggle with academic writing – and lecturers will have to find ways to manage these difficulties. Collaborating with and learning from other professionals in higher education is worth exploring in this endeavour.

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Appendix. A model from Södertörn University for collaborating across professions in higher education to support students' academic writing.

Time	Activity
Pre-phase	**Higher pedagogy workshops for lecturers**. Librarians and writing teachers hold higher pedagogy workshops about academic writing for all university lecturers in the programme or subject involved in the collaboration.
	Joint planning of a teaching element for students. Librarians and writing teachers collaborate with lecturers from the programme to plan a teaching element about academic writing and integrate it into an existing course. The planning includes practical aspects such as creating assignments, teaching materials and response templates, but also introduces the lecturers to central concepts used in academic literacy teaching by the librarians and writing teachers.
Execution phase	**Joint execution of the teaching element for three consecutive semesters.** See details below:
	Lecture. Lecturers, librarians and writing teachers give a joint introductory lecture to the course students about academic reading and writing, information seeking and source evaluation.
	Assignment, first version. Students are given a search and writing assignment. They hand in a first version of the text.
	Preparing response. Lecturers, librarians and writing teachers read the students' texts and prepare response: a written individual response via a response template, as well as a verbal group response. The students are assigned to read some of their peers' texts and prepare response.
	Response seminar. Lecturers, librarians and writing teachers hold a follow-up seminar and give oral feedback to the student group. The students then give oral feedback to each other in small groups. Finally, the students get access to the individual written teacher response.
	Assignment, final version. Students hand in a second and final version of the text, which is assessed and graded by the lecturers.
Transition phase	**Continuous evaluation of the teaching element**. The collaboration continues the next time the course is given, and the next – in total three semesters. The element is continuously evaluated and adjusted by the lecturers, librarians and writing teachers.
	Gradual handover to the lecturers. The lecturers are gradually given more responsibility for carrying out the teaching element, while the librarians and writing teachers take on a more consultative role. After the collaboration is ended, the goal is for the lecturers to feel ready to teach academic writing on their own.