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Disciplinary epistemologies, generic attributes and undergraduate academic writing in nursing and midwifery

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**Abstract**

Generic attributes such as 'holding a critical stance?', 'using evidence to support claims?', and 'projecting an impersonal voice?' are central to disciplinary academic writing in higher education. These attributes, also referred to as 'skills?', have for a long time been conceptualised as transferable in that once learnt students are able to use them in a variety of contexts and for a range of needs. Over the past few years, however, the conceptualisation of these attributes as transferable has come under close scrutiny as they have been identified to be highly context-sensitive rather than context-flexible as they were once thought to be. Drawing on data from a 2-year study on undergraduate academic writing in nursing and midwifery at a university in the UK, this paper critically examines the role of disciplinary epistemologies in the conceptualisation of these attributes in the two disciplines, and demonstrates how these beliefs help to shape academic writing at undergraduate level, thus contributing to debates on generic skills and attributes and specificity in disciplinary discourses. The

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paper concludes by highlighting the importance for writers to examine how knowledge is displayed, constructed and communicated in their disciplines, and the significance of analysing the relationship between disciplinary epistemologies, generic attributes and academic writing as a way of gaining access to and producing central discourses in their professional community. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Gimenez, Julio, E-Mail: [Julio.Gimenez@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Julio.Gimenez@nottingham.ac.uk)