Academic Writing Training Programs to Developing Teachers' Writing Skills for Publication

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Abstract

This action research-based writing training is a component of the community service initiative or called PKM (Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat) organized by social studies lecturers of the Teacher Training Faculty, Tanjungpura University. The training adopted an action research approach, which involved some cycles, each comprising planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. This approach was chosen to encourage participants to share their insights to improve the training quality. The research goal was to gather teachers' perceptions and recommendations for enhancing the quality of action research-based academic writing training. The study involved 28 secondary school Social Studies teachers taking place at SMK 2 Singkawang. To collect data, an open-ended questionnaire was utilized. The results revealed that teachers faced challenges in accessing internet resources and suggested extending the duration of the training. They also recommended providing more comprehensive information and examples for each section of the research article. Lastly, the teachers expressed a positive view of the training.

Keywords*: academic writing program, action research, publication*

Introduction

As per the regulations outlined in the Indonesian Ministry of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform No. 16 Year 2009, Indonesian teachers seeking promotion to III/b must fulfil a publication requirement. The publication might encompass either their research on teaching practices or an article that provides a review-based perspective. Nonetheless, the proficiency of Indonesian teachers in academic writing for publication remains limited (Turmudi, Saukah, & Cahyono, 2020). Past researchers have attributed this deficiency in Indonesian academic writing skills to several factors, including low motivation to write, time constraints, inadequate writing skills, limited digital literacy, and insufficient training in academic writing (Rohman & Sugeng, 2022). Additionally, teachers may not have regular exposure to academic writing due to their primary focus being on teaching content rather than writing (Zainuddin, Harahap, & Naldi, 2023). Consequently, there is a need for training programs to enhance teachers' writing competencies. Trainings for teachers are planned intervention that prepare to

have effective teaching, and master the knowledge that is going to teach to students have skills (Orchard & Winch, 2015).

This teacher training aligns with the cultural capital framework, as introduced by French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu as cited in Huang (2019). Cultural capital encompasses valued knowledge, skills, and experiences within a specific social context (Huang, 2019). The training program aims to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences in academic writing, fostering a writing habitus. This, in turn, can nurture a writing culture, provide resources for skill improvement, and facilitate networking and collaboration opportunities among teachers (Rosa & Mujiarto, 2020). The training may include mentorship, collaborative projects, and participation in conferences.

Essentially, the academic writing training program for teachers aligns with the cultural capital framework's emphasis on social networks for acquiring and transmitting academic writing skills. This program can provide support, feedback, and behaviours to enhance teachers' writing habits, such as effective ideas for organization and structured writing schedules. Collaborative writing initiatives among teachers can facilitate mutual knowledge exchange (Su & Zou, 2022). Given these circumstances, it is crucial for teachers to enhance their writing skills through proper training.

In Indonesia, trainings among teachers conducted by the "Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran" (MGMP), which translates to the "Professional Development Group of Teachers". This organization plays a significant role in enhancing and sustaining teachers' competence through regular discussions, training, and seminars (Zakir, 2020). MGMP focuses on improving teaching practices to benefit student learning (Iskandar, Darmanto, & Suryani, 2020). Through participation in MGMP training sessions, teachers can enhance their

academic writing skills. However, these training sessions tend to be instructor-centred, potentially resulting in passive participation and limited decision-making opportunities for teachers (Alimin, Hartati, & Simarmata, 2020). Such an approach might not effectively foster the development of teachers' writing skills, which require active practice. To ensure effective training, it is recommended that teacher training adopt an active and participatory learning process, engaging teachers as proactive learners throughout the entire professional development journey.

This approach entails involving teachers in all stages, from planning to reflection of training (Allela, Ogange, Junaid, & Charles, 2020). Therefore, academic writing training programs should allow teachers to actively collaborate with researchers, addressing the challenge of inadequate academic writing skills and enhancing teachers' knowledge and abilities in this domain. Implementing training in the form of action research, as suggested by Supriyanto (2017), can be beneficial. Action research is a systematic problem-solving process (Susman & Evered, 2023) involving intervention, data analysis, and action implementation to address educational issues (Mertler, 2014). The action research process consists of steps such as problem identification, data collection, analysis and feedback, action planning, implementation, and evaluation (Mertler, 2014). Within each cycle of action research, encompassing planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, educational practices can be improved, benefiting both teachers and students (Dewi, Kultsum, & Armadi, 2016). Action research empowers teachers to explore solutions to educational challenges (James & Augustin, 2018).

Prior research has explored action research-based training for teachers. Dewi et al. (2017) conducted action research-based training for junior high school teachers,

involving facilitators who identified writing challenges and organized training sessions. In this study, the researchers played a crucial role as facilitators in acquiring insights into the challenges faced by teachers when writing and in seeking input from their peers for enhancement. Initially, the researchers conducted interviews with teachers to understand the difficulties they encountered while writing articles. Subsequently, they devised a training plan aimed at addressing these writing-related challenges among the teachers. This training encompassed various elaboration and writing strategies. To assess the effectiveness of their training, the researchers regularly engaged in reflective practices by conducting interviews with the participants after each session. They actively solicited feedback and suggestions from the teachers on areas that could be improved. The researchers highlighted that employing action research enabled them to gather valuable input from the teachers regarding which actions or strategies would be most beneficial for enhancing their practices. Furthermore, they asserted that most teachers demonstrated the ability to compose paragraphs following the provided guidelines. As a result, the researchers contended that by incorporating action research into the training process for article publication, they could actively involve teachers in the evolution of the training itself. This participatory approach, the researchers argued, promoted democracy within the training process (Dewi et al., 2017).

Similarly, Zulfadli & Ferryansyah (2017) conducted action research-based training for teachers, resulting in improved writing skills due to active teacher engagement and guidance. The study involved primary school educators as participants. The training program consisted of two cycles, each comprising planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The subject matter for the teachers' writing revolved around Science and Mathematics. Throughout the training, the teachers engaged in practical exercises to enhance their writing skills related to Math and Science teaching practices. The researchers conducted interviews with the teachers to identify the specific challenges they encountered while writing. According to the researchers, some instructors lacked confidence in their written work. The participants themselves indicated that certain sections of writing, such as the introduction, methodology, and discussion, presented difficulties. Nevertheless, the researchers provided clear guidelines and offered feedback for each section of the teachers' written work. The study by Zulfadli & Ferryansyah (2017) asserted that training based on action research greatly encouraged teachers' involvement. This involvement extended to providing feedback on the training process itself, leading to improvements in their writing abilities. The researchers also reported that the teachers exhibited improvement in their writing skills, particularly in areas like abstracts, references, conclusions, and recommendations (Zulfadli & Ferryansyah, 2017).

The most recent study involved action research-based training for Chemistry teachers who are part of the MGMP's activity in Kediri, consisting of six Chemistry teachers (Hidayah, Maharani, & Muchlis, 2020). The researchers structured the study into three phases: planning, execution, and assessment. During the planning phase, the researchers inquired with the participants about their suggestions and considerations for the training program. In the subsequent implementation phase, the researchers provided instruction on various strategies related to article writing. Finally, in the evaluation or reflective phase, the teachers were invited to share their feedback and viewpoints regarding the training. The

majority of the participants expressed a positive perception of the training, highlighting that it was both novel and highly beneficial to them (Hidayah et al., 2020). They emphasized that the training provided new insights and greatly contributed to their professional growth.

In conclusion, these studies highlight the potential of action research to engage participants and address training challenges, particularly in the context of writing publication. Action research empowers teachers and encourages their active participation, promoting democracy within the training process (Janes, 2016). Recognizing the benefits of action research-based training for enhancing writing skills, this study aims to replicate and expand upon these findings in Pontianak, an area where such research is lacking. This study seeks to explore teachers' perspectives on training improvement and their perceptions of action research-based training for writing articles.

Method

The research methodology employed in this study was centred on the principles of action research. The study is a part of community service program conducted by social studies lecturers at Teacher Training Faculty, Tanjungpura University in cooperation with the MGMP in Singkawang regency, located within the West Kalimantan Province. This study involved a total of 28 social studies secondary school teachers. The selection of participants was carried out through invitation, and those who positively responded to the invitation became part of the training sessions. The training was conducted in Vocational School of Singkawang Number 2 or called as SMK 2 Singkawang. The action research design adopted here encompassed two distinct cycles, with each cycle being comprised of four sequential stages: planning, implementation, observation, and

reflection, as detailed in the works of Lubis & Ahkas (2022) and Fatikah & Ahkas (2022).

To accumulate relevant data, open-ended questionnaires were employed as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaires comprised five inquiries that delved into areas such as identifying the most challenging aspects of writing, gauging the participants' perspectives on the training, eliciting suggestions for improvements, assessing the participants' perceived post-training capabilities, and evaluating their overall perception of the training's effectiveness. The data collected from these questionnaires underwent a comprehensive process of thematic analysis. This analytical approach, in line with the framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2014), is a qualitative method that systematically categorizes data and extracts thematic patterns. The process of thematic analysis adheres to six essential steps: transcribing the collected data, generating relevant codes, identifying emerging themes, critically reviewing these themes, defining and labelling the established themes, and ultimately producing a comprehensive analytical report (Xu & Zammit, 2020). These steps are outlined in Diagram 1 provided below.

Diagram 1. Thematic analysis stages
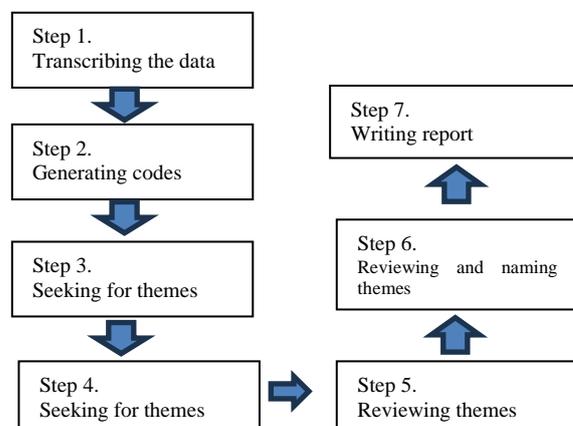
Results and Discussion

Regarding suggestions for improvement, the initial cycle of the study revealed a predominant theme: participants expressed the need for guidance on accessing references for their reading materials. One participant noted, "we lack information about how to access online readings. More information on this would be helpful". Another prevalent theme was the request for extended training duration. A participant emphasized, "having more time would allow facilitators to review our work and provide personalized feedback, which would be beneficial". A third theme highlighted the desire for additional examples for various sections of an article. A teacher suggested, "It would be helpful if the facilitator could provide more examples, like for the literature review, methodology, findings, discussions, and conclusions."

Following the first cycle, the researchers reviewed participants' feedback from the open-ended questionnaires and devised strategies based on the findings. These strategies were then implemented in subsequent training sessions. The researchers introduced participants to online resources for references, including a platform like Google Scholar. Haddaway et al. (2015) claimed that Google Scholar proves to be a valuable platform for swiftly retrieving articles pertinent to the topic being reviewed by a writer. In relation to personal feedback to teachers writing, the facilitators displayed participants' writing in the classroom and encouraged peer feedback. This approach not only disseminated valuable writing tips but also embraced democratic participation (Dewi et al., 2017), as participants actively engaged in feedback sessions, enhancing their writing comprehension after evaluating their peers or getting evaluation form peers (Patchan & Schunn, 2015).

After the second cycle, participants were administered open-ended questionnaires focusing on areas of improvement and their perceptions of the action research-based training. The first emerging theme in this cycle highlighted the value of detailed information in aiding participants to construct different sections of an article. One participant noted, "having examples for every part of an article, like the introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussions, and conclusion, helped me understand better. It's like having a template to follow." Another participant emphasized the significance of examples paired with explanations, viewing them as effective writing guides. The second theme revolved around participants' appreciation for information about accessing e-references and using the Mendeley reference manager. One teacher commented, "Mendeley is a fantastic reference manager; it has significantly aided my reference organization". Another noted that, "Google Scholar is invaluable for emerging researchers, but subscription requirements hinder access to some journal articles." Regarding participants' perceptions of action research-based writing training, one theme underscored the effectiveness of applying action research in training. Participants emphasized that their active involvement in shaping training improvements was a contributing factor to the training's effectiveness. Another theme revealed that the training was beneficial, as it equipped them with the skills to tackle article writing and potentially secure career advancement.

Based on these findings, action research facilitated participants' active engagement, allowing them to contribute to training enhancement, a concept congruent with previous research by Allela et al. (2020). This approach provided tailored training aligned with participants' needs, addressing

the quality improvement of teachers' writing skills (James & Augustin, 2018). These findings align with past studies by Dewi et al. (2017), Hidayah, Maharani, & Muchlis (2020) and Zulfadli & Ferryansyah (2017), underscoring the benefits of action research-based training for enhancing article writing quality among teachers. Reflection stages in action research were deemed pivotal for enhancing training quality, as they enabled researchers to incorporate participants' perspectives into training development (Lin, 2019). This inclusive approach extended beyond researcher observation, enhancing the overall quality of training. Action research embodied emancipation, empowering participants to actively contribute to classroom practice improvement. This positive perception of action research-based training aligns with the work of Dewi et al. (2017), Hidayah, Maharani, & Muchlis (2020) and Zulfadli & Ferryansyah (2017).

Considering the demanding teaching responsibilities, MGMP-facilitated training played a pivotal role in enhancing teachers' professional development. This, in turn, facilitated article publication knowledge acquisition, aligning with Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital framework as expounded by Huang (2019). By nurturing writing habitus through socialization, teachers were exposed to academic writing standards, helping them fulfil the government's promotion criteria and enhancing their teaching abilities.

Conclusion

This research aims to investigate how teachers view the enhancement of training and their opinions regarding training that utilizes action research methods for article writing. The study demonstrated the effectiveness of action research in enhancing article writing training quality for teachers. The approach of action research-based writing training fostered active participant engagement, promoting democratic and emancipatory principles. The study also highlighted teachers' positive perception of action research-based training, emphasizing its role in skill development and potential career advancement. The advantage of this research lies in its utilization of an open-ended questionnaire, which allows for the collection of diverse responses from participants, potentially resulting in a thorough and comprehensive set of findings. While open-ended questionnaires effectively captured participants' perspectives, future research may consider closed-ended questionnaires for causal analysis. In brief, this community service initiative aims to provide training through action research, with the goal of enhancing teachers' engagement in improving the quality of training. This, in turn, can help develop their proficiency in writing articles for publication.

Acknowledgement

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