Scientific Article Writing Mentoring for the English Subject Teacher Association in Palangka Raya

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Abstract:

This community service aimed to address the professional development needs of teachers to enhance their career prospects. Teachers must compile portfolios to accumulate credit points for career advancement, thus necessitating their proficiency as teacher-writers. Hence, this sustainable community service sought to assist English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in secondary high schools throughout Palangka Raya in comprehending the fundamentals of scientific writing, producing scientific articles, conducting research, and drafting research reports. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, which focuses on community empowerment, was employed for this endeavor. The activities were carried out over 12 workshop sessions involving 30 EFL teachers from the English Subject Teachers Association (MGMP) for junior and senior high schools in Palangka Raya. Before and after the workshops, KWL worksheets and WhatsApp Group discussions were utilized to facilitate the teachers’ learning process. The results demonstrated that: (1) mentoring activities were executed effectively, with 80% of the planned materials successfully delivered to the participants; (2) participants expressed a positive perception of the activities, including satisfaction, relevance to their needs, comprehension, and overall significance.

Keywords: English, Subject Teacher Association (MGMP), Scientific Article Writing

Introduction

Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers mandates the duties of teachers as professionals. Therefore, they must develop their professionalism and careers. In connection with this circumstance, Gunawan, Triwiyanto, and Kusmaningrum argue that it is not enough for teachers to simply think; they also need to express their ideas,
notions, and thoughts in written form as scientific works to be published to contribute to the development of knowledge and advance their careers as educators (Gunawan et al., 2018). Scientific publications refer to works published by teachers as their contributions to improving the quality of learning in schools and promoting the growth of the educational community (Kemendikbud, 2016). It aligns with the Joint Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 03/V/Pb/2010 and the Head of BKN (National Civil Service Agency) Number 14 of 2010, Article 17, Paragraph 2 (Mendiknas & BKN, 2010), which states that teachers are required to engage in continuous professional development activities, including self-development, scientific publications, or innovative work, in order to be eligible for promotion. In summary, they must recognize the significance of being teacher-writers, as accumulating portfolios through scientific publications can provide additional credit points for their professional advancement, which can be valuable when seeking career progression.

The ability of teachers to write scientific papers is closely linked to their professional career development (Hasanah & Sulha, 2022). By being involved in such an activity, they can address obstacles or challenges encountered in the classroom (Sodiq et al., 2014). Writing also enables educators to share their teaching experiences with the broader public, including effective teaching methods, techniques, and instructional media successfully applied in the classroom (Emaliana et al., 2019). However, the obligation to write scientific papers as a requirement for promotion has become burdensome (Ibda, 2017) and poses challenges to career advancement (Haerazi et al., 2020). Noorjannah categorizes the problems teachers face in writing scientific papers into two categories: internal factors (related to the teacher as the writer) and external factors (related to aspects outside the teacher as the writer (Noorjannah, 2014).

Thohir, Zamzam, and Amin (2019) explain the difficulties that arise from teachers themselves, including heavy teaching loads that require them to allocate more time for lesson preparation and evaluating
students' learning progress, as well as the limited knowledge and skills in scientific paper writing (Thohir et al., 2019). Supriyanto identifies nine obstacles that teachers face in writing scientific papers: (a) low motivation to write, (b) limited free time, (c) lack of understanding of writing techniques, (d) difficulty in finding relevant data, (e) lack of technological literacy, (f) inadequate access to reference materials, (g) proliferation of scientific paper writing services, (h) ineffective MGMP (Subject Teacher Association) activities in enhancing competence in scientific paper writing, and (i) lack of support from schools (Supriyanto, 2009). Accordingly, a study by Pahar revealed that up to 99.37% of teachers struggled to write scientific papers or conduct research (Pahar, 2021).

The follow-up to overcome this issue is to conduct article writing mentoring activities. Fatah, Wakid, and Yoga (2015) state that article-writing mentoring activities effectively improve teachers’ understanding of scientific paper types, such as articles and proceedings (Fatah et al., 2015). However, the reality is that teachers face genuine difficulties in writing scientific papers, as reported in mentoring activities published in community service journals. Gunawan, Triwiyanto, and Kusumaningrum (2018) concluded that participants in the mentoring activities had a limited understanding of writing types and scientific articles despite their high willingness to write (Gunawan et al., 2018). Emaliana, Rahmiati, Suwarso, and Inayati (2019) conducted a mentoring program and discovered that none of the 55 English language teachers who were members of the English Language Subject Teacher Association (MGMP) of Senior High School in Malang Raya had research data from classroom action research, preventing them from producing articles as scientific papers (Emaliana et al., 2019). Likewise, English language teachers who participated in the mentoring activities conducted by Thohir, Zamzam, and Amin (2019) encountered challenges such as busy teaching schedules, lack of research ideas and references, insufficient knowledge of research methodologies, writing
research reports, and publishing, as well as a limited culture of expressing ideas in written form (Thohir et al., 2019).

Based on the problems identified in the literature review, a needs analysis was conducted to establish a more robust rationale for community service. It involved analyzing the outcomes of the previous year’s community service program and distributing an open-ended questionnaire to gather information on the need for scientific writing mentoring. The results of the previous mentoring program indicated that (1) out of 20 registered teachers, only 13 actively participated in the activities; (2) only 10 out of 20 demonstrated motivation to formulate research topics, find relevant theories, create article outlines, collect data, and compile article drafts; (3) identified causes of the problems included teachers' lack of knowledge on finding appropriate references, limited understanding of quality scientific papers, low reading motivation, heavy teaching loads, and classroom management challenges, and poor time management; and (4) English language teachers who were members of the English Language Subject Teacher Association (MGMP) of Senior High School in Palangka Raya city still required professional development support in the form of scientific paper writing mentoring. Therefore, the present community service program initiative aimed to address the professional development needs of teachers.

**Method of Service**

This community service utilized the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, oriented towards community empowerment. Hence, it should be based on the needs and problems of society. PAR is a community-led approach focusing on developing knowledge and capacity to address problems (Afandi et al., 2016). The activities took the form of workshops that included lectures (providing materials), discussions (conducted through WhatsApp and in-person), and practical exercises on scientific paper writing (held every Friday and Saturday), with each session lasting 120 minutes. The participants
comprised 30 English teachers who were members of the English Language Subject Teacher Association (MGMP) of Senior High School and Junior High School in Palangka Raya City. The mentors included permanent and non-permanent lecturers from the Tadris Bahasa Inggris study program of IAIN Palangka Raya, Donald Eldon Hobbs, M.A. (an English Language Fellow (ELF) from the RELO US Embassy for IAIN Palangka Raya), and one student. The mentoring materials for the 12 sessions covered various topics, including (a) the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English teaching, (b) the fundamentals of Classroom Action Research (CAR), (c) the four phases of CAR and criteria for success, (d) review of previous CAR articles based on individual interests, (e) discussions on topics aligned with research interests, (f) discussions on the framework (outline) of the introduction section, (g) discussions on the draft framework (outline) of the method section, (h) review of the framework (outline), (i) summarizing and paraphrasing, (j) formulation of lesson plans (RPP) and data collection instruments, (k) data collection, and (l) how to use Zotero for automatic reference writing.

Results and Discussion

The community service activity sought to provide theoretical and practical knowledge on scientific paper writing and improve teachers’ ability to produce high-quality scientific papers. The mentoring sessions successfully followed the planned procedures and methods.

1. Implementation of Service Activities

The implementation of the service activities involved face-to-face meetings over 12 sessions, which were divided into the following stages.

a. The First Stage

The first stage comprised workshops in which relevant materials were presented to enhance teachers’ initial knowledge of contemporary issues in English language teaching and scientific writing. For instance, Workshop 1 focused on Classroom Action Research and utilizing ICT in English language teaching. Mr. Hobbs, the companion speaker,
delivered the material titled “What, Why, and How to Provide English Learning Using ICT.” He emphasized the need for teachers to adapt to the rapid advancement of information technology and the digital generation. Another topic covered in Workshop 1 was "Revolution and Education 4.0," which discussed the use of technology in teaching English to foreign language learners. The discussions contained the various technologies that teachers can employ in the classroom (CALL, MALL, TELL, and WELL), teaching models like SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) and TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), teaching a foreign language using technology, and preparation of teaching toolboxes.

The second session of Workshop 1 focused on “Kids Story Builder to Encourage Students to Visualize English Skills” and specifically explored the utilization of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) with the Kids Story Builder platform to enhance English skills.

**Figure 1.**

*Presentation of Materials on the Use of ICT in English Language Learning*
After the material presentation, the participants practiced what they had learned using their smartphones. The activity is described in the figures below.

**Figure 2.**

*Participants Having a Practice with the Kids Story Builder App*

In the second meeting, the materials focused on the what, why, and how of Classroom Action Research (CAR). Similar to the first occasion, a warm-up activity was conducted before the material presentation. The mentors provided a KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned) worksheet in which participants filled in the “Known” column with their knowledge about CAR and the “What to Learn” column with questions/statements related to the CAR knowledge they wanted to acquire. Afterward, they shared their perceptions of CAR by placing papers with appropriate responses. Following the CAR material presentation and warm-up activities, participants were divided into groups based on their interests to discuss relevant articles. They recorded the discussion results on provided cardboard sheets, and then group representatives presented the key points. The discussions continued until the fourth meeting, where participants received guidance on finding research topic ideas by accessing reputable English language learning journals.
Subsequently, participants reviewed CAR articles based on their interests. After selecting an article, they wrote and presented their reviews to the class to receive feedback from presenters and other participants. Alternatively, they presented the results of their group discussions. The participants' enthusiasm in writing the review results is evident in the following figure.

**Figure 3.**

*Participants' Enthusiasm in Presenting the Results of Article Reviews*

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**b. The Second Stage**

The second stage of the mentoring activity focused on the construction of drafts. In this regard, workshops conducted during meetings 5-10 aimed to guide participants through the various stages of writing an academic paper. These stages included selecting a topic (meeting 4), reviewing relevant journal articles (meeting 4), formulating the research problem (meeting 5), formulating the introduction section
(meeting 5), formulating the methods section (meeting 5), data collection (meeting 6-7), and outlining the paper (meeting 8-10). The workshop activities in the second stage were conducted using a blended learning approach, which incorporated the following components: (1) distribution of materials prior to offline meetings, (2) voluntary individual presentations, (3) class discussions, (4) drawing conclusion, and (5) review of meetings through a WhatsApp Group (WAG).

During the writing process, class discussions were frequently employed as a method of collaboration. Participants exhibited high enthusiasm in sharing information, discussing research topics, posing questions, and providing feedback to their peers. The following figure illustrates an example of a class discussion.

**Figure 4.**
Class Discussion

2. Achievement of Service Performance Results

This community service focused on enhancing teachers’ awareness of the importance of being teacher-writers. The mentoring activities were successful, with all the prepared materials being delivered. The utilization of the KWL worksheet resulted in increased
engagement from teachers and improved comprehension of the materials. The following figure presents a sample of the teachers' KWL Worksheet.

**Figure 5.**

*Sample of KWL Worksheet*

![Sample of KWL Worksheet](image)

The effectiveness of the KWL strategy in facilitating teachers’ understanding of the material is supported by previous research. For instance, Erliana found that the KWL worksheet improved students' reading comprehension and fostered independent learning (Erliana, 2014). Similarly, Vy and Ha (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of the KWL strategy in improving students’ reading comprehension in the experimental group (Vy & Ha, 2020). These findings align with the outcomes observed in the present mentoring activity, in which 85% of participants expressed positive views on its use during the process. By activating teachers’ prior knowledge through the “Know” column of the KWL worksheet, the activity facilitated the integration of existing
understanding with new information from workshop materials and presenters.

Alongside the teachers' active engagement, another notable accomplishment was their adherence to the mentoring process. It was evident in their enthusiasm during discussions, meticulous documentation of discussion results in the provided papers, and presentations of group discussion outcomes to obtain feedback from presenters and fellow participants. The participants' enthusiasm in documenting the results of group discussions is exemplified in the following figure.

**Figure 6.**

*Participants' Enthusiasm in Presenting the Results of the Discussion*

In addition, the use of blended learning, combining *WAG* and face-to-face meetings, was proven to effectively facilitate the implementation of mentoring activities in this community service. Specifically, the utilization of *WhatsApp* enabled the delivery of
materials for both the first and second stages, enhanced communication, and fostered productive discussions (Learning, 2018). Similarly, the adoption of a flipped classroom approach, incorporating WhatsApp for learning and offline meetings for in-person interactions, was shown to promote active learning among participants, as observed in Hung's study (Hung, 2015). In the Indonesian context, the success of this mentoring activity aligns with the positive perceptions of participants reported in Hanisi, Risdiani, Utami, and Sulisworo’s study, in which WhatsApp usage contributed to students’ positive feelings and learning intentions (Hanisi et al., 2018). The feasibility of utilizing WhatsApp in blended learning settings in Indonesia is further supported by Gayatri, Chen, and Sit's review study (Li & O'Rourke, 2022).

The effectiveness of the mentoring activity was assessed through a survey conducted using the Google Form platform. The survey aimed to gauge teachers' perceptions of mentoring activities in community service. The questionnaire was distributed on the final day of the program. Analysis of the survey results revealed promising outcomes regarding participants' perceptions of the activity's implementation. In this regard, most of them expressed positive views regarding the activities’ alignment with their needs and the meaningfulness of the service.

Specifically, 23 teachers strongly agreed, and six teachers agreed with the statement regarding satisfaction with the implementation of the activities. Conversely, one participant disagreed, potentially due to the limited time allocated for preparing instruments (material 10) and data collection (material 11), which were only two weeks. The questionnaire data collected from 30 participants regarding the suitability of the activities to their needs indicated that 60% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 6% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed. In this context, three participants emphasized the essence of tailoring the materials to their abilities and interests.

Regarding the understanding of the workshop material, 15% of teachers strongly agreed, 80% agreed, and 5% disagreed. The disagreed
participants encountered challenges in comprehending the material due to their limited engagement in filling out the KWL worksheets and participating in class discussions and online interactions through WAG. Lastly, when assessing the meaningfulness of the activities based on the questionnaire data from 30 participants, 16% strongly agreed, 79% agreed, 4% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed. Some participants attributed their limited participation in all activities to being "busy," while others did not consider scientific writing or research skills necessary. These hesitations and misconceptions align with the findings Kholiq (2022) reported on mentoring activities for civil servant teachers, in which he highlighted their lack of belief in the necessity of acquiring scientific writing skills (Kholiq, 2022).

3. Analysis of Service Problems

The implementation team conducted the mentoring activities in 12 sessions and encountered factors supporting or hindering the process. The enthusiasm displayed by the participating teachers and the service team was a supporting factor throughout the activity. However, several obstacles were encountered during the mentoring program. Firstly, despite expressing initial enthusiasm to participate in the mentoring activity, teachers needed to demonstrate greater consistency in their engagement throughout the mentoring process. Correspondingly, only a subset of teachers completed the assigned tasks; not all teachers attended the mentoring sessions. Some others also needed to be more actively involved in filling out the KWL worksheet to discuss the materials and address learning difficulties, whether within the classroom or through the WhatsApp Group. The identified reasons for these challenges included the heavy teaching workload and responsibilities as class teachers.

Another issue confronted by the English teacher participants in this program was the need for additional free time to allocate to preparing scientific papers. They also required assistance finding research data and struggled to compile a draft outline. This finding
aligns with the results reported by Supriyanto (2015). Consequently, only eight teachers explained their research topic, and none submitted a draft research outline. This service activity further confirms the results of previous initiatives aimed at assisting with scientific writing, such as the studies conducted by Emaliana, Rahmiati, Suwarso, and Inayati (2019) and Thohir, Zamzam, and Amin (2019).

4. Alternative Solution

The analysis of the mentoring activities revealed that teachers still faced particular challenges. Despite utilizing blended learning through WhatsApp to address limitations in time and space, facilitate the learning process, and implement the KWL strategy to support knowledge and comprehension construction, the mentoring activity could have achieved more satisfactory results. Specifically, out of the 30 teachers in the English Language Subject Teacher Association (MGMP) of Senior High School and Junior High School in Palangka Raya City who registered for the program, only 13 remained actively engaged, and only eight successfully explained their research topics. To enhance future implementations, several potential solutions have been identified: (1) requiring teachers to sign commitment letters, (2) formal assignment of teachers by the school's principal using assignment letters, (3) establishing partnerships between IAIN Palangka Raya and relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, (4) implementing a reward and punishment system, and (5) ensuring continuous and regular mentoring sessions subject to evaluation to achieve sustainable result. However, it is essential to note that these solutions cannot be universally applied, as participants have diverse needs and characteristics. Additionally, further investigation and empirical evidence are necessary to support the feasibility and effectiveness of these proposed solutions.
Conclusion

Professionalism and career development are essential aspects that teachers must prioritize. All teachers participating in the mentoring activity possess the necessary skills for writing scientific papers, as they have previously completed thesis writing as a requirement for obtaining their Bachelor's degrees. However, they encountered challenges in finding adequate references to identify class-related problems that could be pursued as research topics, comprehending relevant literature to develop research ideas, engaging in discussions with fellow teachers, and writing scientific papers due to time constraints.

Difficulties in writing arose from various factors, including a lack of knowledge on sourcing appropriate references, insufficient understanding of good scientific practices, low motivation to read, heavy teaching and classroom management responsibilities, and poor time management. Overall, the mentoring activities were successfully implemented, evidenced by the satisfactory achievement of material targets, with 80% of the planned content effectively delivered to the participants. This mentoring program stood out from others due to its utilization of blended learning through WhatsApp and the KWL worksheet. Firstly, WhatsApp served as an effective medium for providing content and input to participants. Materials were distributed before the mentoring activities, and assignments and additional resources were shared afterward. This approach helped overcome limitations in time and space, enabling teachers with heavy workloads to access the materials and complete assignments at their own pace. It also facilitated communication and problem-sharing among teachers who might experience high levels of anxiety in face-to-face settings. In addition, using a WhatsApp Group for discussions outside the classroom allowed teachers with anxiety to ask questions and express their opinions comfortably. Furthermore, incorporating the KWL worksheet before, during, and after the material presentations enhanced teachers’ active engagement and focus during the mentoring sessions. It also encouraged teachers to actively participate in learning by building their existing knowledge and setting learning goals. In this regard, they
documented what they wanted to learn from the mentoring activities before the material presentation and reflected on their acquired knowledge afterward.

References


