Academic Writing Workshop
at One Junior High School in Merangin

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A B S T R A C T

The purposes of this community service program were to motivate the teachers to publish and to share our experiences in academic writing, especially writing academic journal article(s). The participants of this workshop were 51 teachers in one of junior high schools (SMP) in Merangin. The workshop was done synchronously and divided into several sessions, including material presentation (concept of academic writing, steps in writing the paper academically, and component of academic writing especially journal article); question and answer; practice (analyzing the paper and formulating the problems); and feedback survey sessions. Based on the result of this program, it is recommended to have similar programs to motivate SMP teachers publish their articles.

Keywords: Community Service, Academic Writing, Journal Article.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is generally defined as a formal type of writing for academic purposes. Hogue (2008), for instance, defined academic writing as a kind of writing used in colleges, universities and scholarly publication. With a more detailed concept, Dalman (2018) argued that academic writing refers to a systematic writing completed with appropriate theoretical lens, clear procedures, and meaningful evidence which aims either to explore or to solve a particular issue. Furthermore, Azan (2021) academic writing is a systematic writing which can be justified. This is evident that, in its implementation, academic writing is written systematically and backed up with evidence as an attempt to give insights in all aspects, including education.

In the context of education, academic writing is pivotal for educational practitioners, such as teachers. One of its significances is to indicate teachers' professionalism. In the last decade, teachers have been urged to conduct research and/or to publish academic writing as it is one of targeted activities for teachers' profession development (Diknas, 2001; Peraturan Menteri, 2009). Another significance of academic writing for teachers is to advance their career and prosperity. By publishing their academic writing, the teachers can have some benefits, such as 1) teachers can level up their career path faster for every two years; and 2) teachers' career is not limited to IVa/administrator, but they can level up their career to IVe/senior teacher or administrator. From this. It is clear that academic writing is important for the teachers to maintain their teaching quality, professionalism, and career path.

Although academic writing is advantageous for teachers, but many of them are reluctant to write. Based on research conducted by Danawati (2017) and Lintangsari et al, (2021), there are several challenges faced by the teachers to produce academic writing and the challenges, eventually, demotivate them to write, such as limited time to write, teachers' lack of motivation, lack of knowledge on professional competence, and limited knowledge and ability to write. In addition, from our preliminary observation by asking the school principal, we found out that the teachers are not really productive to write. Similar reasons were also addressed by the principal of our partner school. These reasons motivated us to do community service program with the topic *Academic Writing Workshop at One of Junior High School in Merangin*.

METHOD

The initial plan of the community service program was to come to the school. However, due to Covid-19 outbreak, the team reconsidered the plan. Based on the result of discussion with school principal, we agreed to have a three-hour workshop on academic writing virtually using zoom (https://zoom.us/) on August 5, 2021 from 8.00-11.00 a.m. Therefore, the method of this community service was interactive online workshop followed by question and answers and practice sessions. The participants of the workshop were 51 teachers of the school.
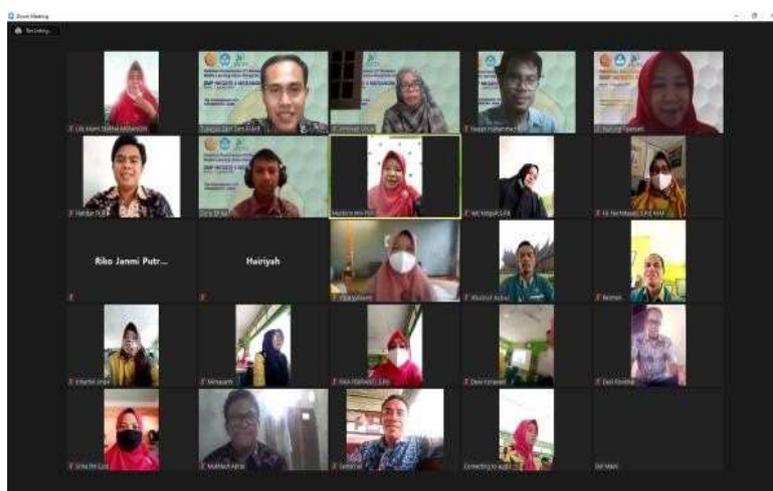
Figure 1. The Poster of Workshop

Figure 2. The Participants of Workshop

To achieve our goal, the process of workshop was divided into four main sessions, including, presentation, discussion (question and answer), practice, and feedback survey. The explanation of each session will be presented in the findings and discussions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As outline in the previous section, there were four main sessions in the workshop. These sessions were conducted in three hours in total, and they are inseparable activities in the workshop.

Presentation

According to Noer (2018), presentation is the provision of information, ideas, motivations and works designed to be easily understood by the audience. In line

with Noer's argument, we chose presentation as our first session in workshop with the aim to share information to the teachers about academic writing as well as to motivate them to become productive teachers. In its implementation, conducted in 45 minutes, the presentation was done by three speakers in turns. The first speaker was Habizar S.Pd., MESL, He explained basic concept of academic writing and the importance of academic writing for teachers. The next speaker was Dr. Mukhlash Abrar, SS., M.Hum. He explained a more technical information of academic writing, such as the structure of academic writing and the stages to write academic writing. The last speaker was Dr. Nunung Fajaryani, S.Pd., M.Pd. She specifically explained about journal article and displayed one example of journals written by junior high school teachers.

Figure 3. A Sample of Presentation Slide

Discussion

Following presentation session, we had discussion. The core of discussion is to exchange perspectives on a subject and to collectively seek solutions or answers for specific issues or topics (Al-Tabany, 2017). The ultimate goal of the discussion in our workshop was to comprehensively understand the topic as well as to have interaction with the teachers. In our workshop, discussion session consisted of question and answer (Q & A) and was led by Dr. Masbirorotni, S.Pd., M.Sc.Ed. Due to the participants' curiosity about academic writing, the moderator opened three sessions and the time spent for discussion was around 45 minutes. Many teachers shared their stories the reasons they are not productive in writing. They admitted that they had low motivation to write due to many factors, such as limited time to write, work overloaded, and minimum knowledge in technology. They also shared that they did not have many opportunities to join such kind of workshop. In line with teachers' arguments, it seems that they were lack of sufficient academic writing practice or writing habits (Fajaryani et al., 2021 & Fajaryani et al., 2021). Some other teachers asked questions related to academic writing, such as writing citation, developing ideas, writing literature review, and finding relevant literature. In terms of questioning, some teachers asked directly in the form and some of them wrote the questions in the chat box.

Figure 4. Discussion Session (Q&A) with Participants

Practice

After discussion, we had a practice session in academic writing. Practice is an essential part in learning/workshop as it helps individuals acquire their expertise and increases their ability to practiced skill to new and more complex problems (Ericson, et al., 1993). The initial plan of session was helping the teachers find the topic of writing and assisted them in organizing the ideas. Due to online mode of workshop, we finally decided to practice a simple thing in academic writing that was finding relevant references. We directed the participants to open google scholar and typed the key words of references they wanted to look for. Despite the limitation, the teachers were enthusiastically participating the practice session.
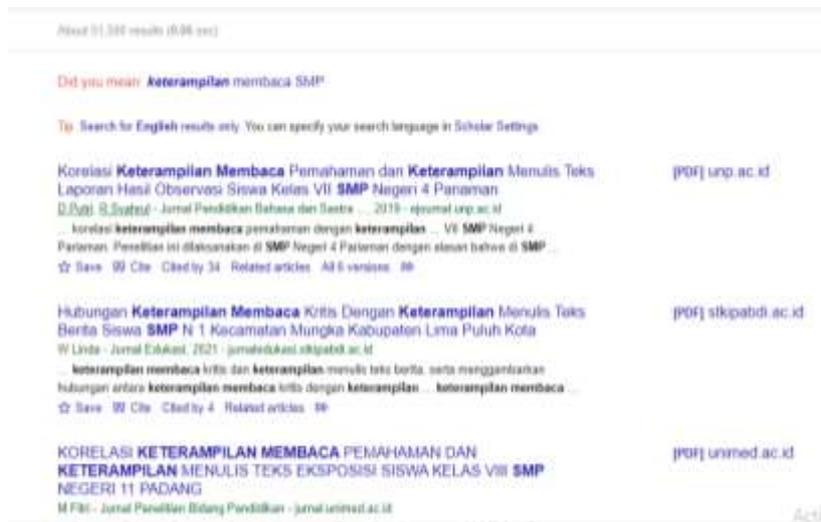

Figure 5. A Sample of Searching Relevant Reference

Feedback Survey

In the last 15 minutes of our workshop, we distributed a simple online feedback survey to the teacher through google form. The purpose of the survey was to know participants' responses to our workshop. There were four items of closed-ended

questions in the survey which covers the importance, usefulness, and expectation of the workshop. All the participants took part in the online feedback survey. The collected data were then analyzed by the teams (Mukhlash Abrar, Nunung Fajaryani, Masbirorotni, Habizar, and Failasofah). The result of each question is presented in the following figures.

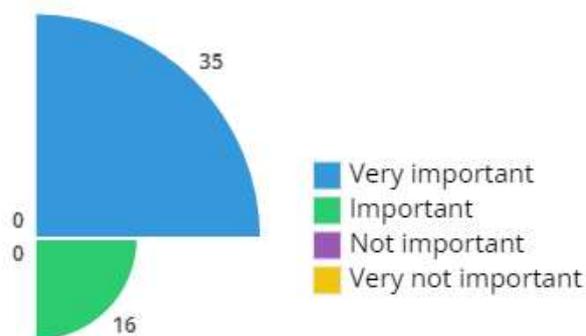Is academic writing workshop at SMP__ Merangin important?

Figure 5. Result of the first question

The first question of our feedback survey related to the importance of academic writing workshop for them. We provided four possible answers, *very important*, *important*, *not important*, and *not very important*. As can be seen in Figure 5, 35 participants (69%) answered that that the workshop is *very important* for them and 16 of them (31%) considered that it is *important*. None of participants responded either not important or not very important. This result indicated that the participants were aware of the importance of the workshop in their school.
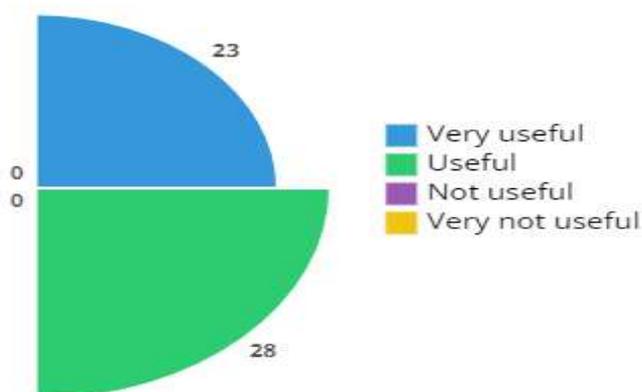
Are the workshop materials useful?

Figure 6. Result of the second question

The second question dealt with the significance of workshop's material. Among four possible answers, 28 participants (55%) responded that workshop is *useful* for them, and 23 participants (45%) answered *very useful*. Similar to the result of the first question, none of participants answered either not useful or not very useful. This result showed that the participants, in general, felt the benefit of the materials given in the workshop.
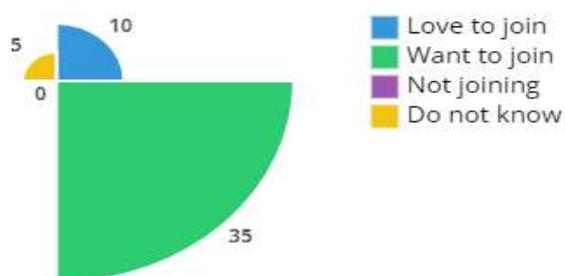

Figure 7. Result of the third question

In our third question of feedback survey, we asked their possibility to join advanced/further training. As can be seen in Figure 7, we provided four answers, including *really want*, *want*, *do not want*, and *do not know*. The majority of respondents (35 of them or 68.6%) responded that they *want* to join advance workshop. 10 participants seemed enthusiastic because (19.6%) they confirmed that they *really want* to join and participate in the following advanced workshop. Few participants, 5 of them (9.8%), answered that they still *do not know* whether they will join advanced workshop or not. Lastly, there was no participant responded that do not want to join further workshop. These data indicated that the participants are quite responsive and open-minded to the workshop.
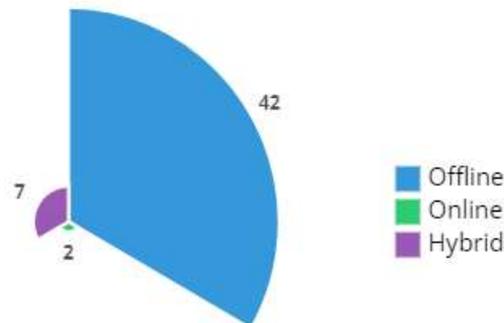
What is effective workshop mode?

Figure 8. Result of the fourth question

The last question of our feedback survey related to the mode of effective academic writing workshop. Yuniastary & da Silva (2022), in their research, found that as teachers or tutors, we should provide manageable yet effective teaching methods that are appropriate and suitable for the current situation in a very limited time. Therefore, we asked the participants about their preference mode of workshop. We provided three possible answers, including *luring*, *daring*, and *hybrid*. The results showed that 42 respondents (82.3%) responded that *luring* is considered as an effective mode of academic writing workshop. The others optional answers are low in percentage. For *hybrid* mode, for instance, seven participants (13.7%) answered *hybrid* and only two participants chose online mode as an effective mode of workshop. The participants' responses to choose *luring* mode seem reasonable considering internet connection issues in Indonesia. This was also highlighted by Wicaksono & Setyowati (2022) in their study. They mentioned that we should keep in mind that confusions and mistakes in online learning occur at times, especially the connection. Moreover, Some national mass media states that internet connection in Indonesia is still not well-established due to some factors, including geography, lack of internet facility and infrastructure (Khidhir, 2019; Rosana, 2020). Therefore, *luring* mode of workshop can still be considered as the best option.

CONCLUSION

The aims of this workshop were to share knowledge about academic writing and at the same time to motivate junior high school teachers to be productive in academic writing. Lack of students' interest and opportunities to write made them, at some points, not productive. Through several activities conducted in the workshop, such as presentation, discussion (listening to their stories and answering their questions), simple practice and administering feedback survey seems effective to motivate junior high school _ Merangin teachers to write.

Acknowledgment

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