DEVELOPING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS AMONG FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
(Participatory Approach to Understanding Scientific Paper Standards in Higher Education)

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Abstract

This study addresses the persistent challenge faced by first-year university students in understanding and applying academic writing conventions required in higher education. The research responds to the gap between students' writing ability and the methodological and linguistic standards expected in academic contexts. The primary objective was to develop students' competence in writing scientific papers that are logical, structured, and ethically sound. The program employed Participatory Action Research (PAR) combined with the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, encouraging students to engage actively through experiential learning, reflection, and peer collaboration. Conducted over two days at the Institut Agama Islam (IAI) Ngawi, the training involved 150 participants, including PMII cadres and first-year students. Findings revealed significant improvement in participants' understanding of academic paper structure, citation practices, and argument development. Moreover, participants demonstrated greater confidence and motivation to write scientific papers independently. The study concludes that participatory and asset-based learning strategies effectively transform academic writing from a procedural task into an intellectual and reflective process, fostering long-term academic literacy and integrity.

Keywords: *Academic Writing; First-Year Students; Participatory Learning; Scientific Paper; Higher Education*

A. Introduction

The ability to write academic papers is an essential academic competence for university students. This activity is not merely a means of academic assessment but also a medium for cultivating critical, reflective, and argumentative thinking skills (Dewi & Yusuf, 2020; Fithriani et al., 2024). Academic writing serves as a process of intellectual training that requires precision, logical consistency, and intellectual integrity. Through writing, students learn to structure ideas systematically and communicate their thoughts clearly while supporting their arguments with theoretical and empirical evidence.

Nevertheless, in practice, most students in Indonesia still face various difficulties in producing scholarly papers that adhere to methodological and linguistic conventions(Hapsari & Lestari, 2022; Sari & Fitria, 2023). Many struggle with formulating research problems, developing theoretical frameworks, or constructing data-based arguments. These difficulties are often rooted in limited academic literacy skills, insufficient mentorship focused on writing practice, and a relatively weak

reading culture among students. This gap indicates that academic writing has not yet become a deeply internalized academic habit within the learning culture of higher education institutions.

Academic literacy plays a central role in shaping higher-order thinking skills and scientific reasoning. According to Biggs & Tang (2011), academic literacy extends beyond the ability to comprehend academic texts-it involves the capacity to generate, interpret, and critique knowledge independently. In the context of higher education, academic literacy acts as a bridge between conceptual understanding and the ability to produce and disseminate knowledge (Yuliani & Arifin, 2022).

Writing scientific papers is not merely a technical skill but a complex cognitive process involving analysis, synthesis, and evidence-based argumentation (Utami & Nurhayati, 2020). In this digital era, however, the writing practices of university students are increasingly influenced by social media habits and informal online communication, which often dilute academic rigor. Recent research by (Prasetiyo, 2024) found that excessive reliance on social media platforms has a significant effect on students' scientific writing ability, indicating a growing need for digital discipline and structured academic literacy training. Therefore, strengthening students' academic writing competence must be embedded within reflective and participatory educational strategies that foster critical and independent thinking.

Consequently, strengthening academic writing competence cannot be separated from educational strategies that emphasize reflective and collaborative learning. Pedagogical models such as *project-based learning* and *writing across the curriculum* have proven effective in improving students' writing quality. These approaches move beyond merely teaching the structure of academic writing; they guide students to understand the epistemological purpose and intellectual responsibility behind each section of a paper. Through this process, students develop critical awareness of scientific reasoning and an appreciation of ethical writing practices.

In response to these challenges, the *Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia* (PMII) Rayon Mahbub Djunaidi, in collaboration with the *Institut Agama Islam (IAI) Ngawi*, organized a *Scientific Paper Writing Workshop* as part of its academic empowerment initiatives. This program was designed to enhance students' writing ability through participatory and practice-based learning. The collaboration represents a concrete embodiment of the *Tri Dharma of Higher Education*, particularly in the domains of teaching and community engagement (Nasution & Azizah, 2023).

The workshop engaged students actively throughout all stages—from topic selection, outline drafting, writing, to revision and reflection. This participatory model allowed students to learn contextually and improve their academic writing skills through direct experience. Beyond skill development, the workshop served as a platform for students to internalize academic values such as objectivity, openness to critique, and intellectual responsibility. It also fostered peer collaboration, encouraging students to learn collectively through discussion and feedback exchange—key elements of an academic community of practice.

The activity adopted the *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) framework introduced by Lewin (1946) and further developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), emphasizing collaboration through cycles of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation (Nugraha & Yuliani, 2021). Combined with the *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD) principle (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), the program viewed students' critical thinking and motivation as intellectual assets to be developed through collective reflection. A similar experiential training model was successfully applied by Prasetiyo and Reni (2025) in community-based teacher development, where demonstration and practice methods

significantly improved participants' competence. This alignment reinforces the relevance of integrating participatory and practical learning strategies in higher education writing programs..

This participatory model treats participants not as passive recipients but as active agents who contribute to designing and executing the learning process. Facilitators act as partners who guide students in identifying strengths and areas for improvement in their writing. The collective reflection sessions that follow each activity promote *metacognitive awareness*-the ability to think critically about one's own thought and writing processes (Rohmah & Hamid, 2019).

By using PAR, the workshop becomes context-sensitive and adaptable to participants' academic backgrounds and needs. This ensures that the learning experience remains relevant and meaningful. More importantly, PAR helps foster a sense of agency among students, empowering them to become self-directed learners capable of critically managing their learning and writing development.

In addition to PAR, the training also incorporated principles of *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD), developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). ABCD emphasizes the use of participants' strengths, motivation, and intellectual potential as primary assets for academic empowerment (Rahmawati & Santoso, 2022).

Rather than focusing on deficiencies, ABCD identifies and mobilizes existing resources—students' prior experiences, skills, and aspirations-as foundations for growth. For instance, students with experience in writing laboratory reports or opinion articles were encouraged to adapt those abilities into formal academic writing. This approach creates a more positive, supportive learning atmosphere where participants feel valued and motivated to progress (Ridwan & Fauzi, 2023).

Furthermore, ABCD helps cultivate a sense of collective academic responsibility. When students recognize that they are part of a productive scholarly community, they become more motivated to contribute intellectually through writing and research. Thus, the workshop serves not only to improve technical writing skills but also to foster a shared academic identity grounded in collaboration, reflection, and innovation.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the program aligns closely with *transformative learning theory*, first proposed by Mezirow (1997). According to Mezirow, meaningful learning occurs when individuals undergo a transformation in perspective through critical reflection on their experiences. In this context, the writing workshop aims not only to equip students with new technical skills but also to transform their perception of writing-from a mere academic obligation to an intellectually and socially valuable process (Gradini & Dhari, 2025).

This transformation unfolds as students come to see academic writing as a means of engaging with broader intellectual communities and contributing to knowledge production. Through reflective dialogue and feedback, participants begin to appreciate that scholarly writing embodies both epistemic responsibility and ethical commitment. As a result, the workshop nurtures reflective, productive, and ethically grounded academic writers capable of articulating thoughtful and evidence-based arguments.

Based on the above context, this community engagement program aims to enhance students' academic competence in producing scholarly papers aligned with methodological standards and ethical writing conventions. The program seeks to strengthen the culture of scientific literacy and

empower students to become agents of change within their academic communities-critical thinkers, productive learners, and competitive contributors in a knowledge-driven society.

Moreover, this initiative holds strategic significance in supporting the *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (Freedom to Learn–Independent Campus) policy, which emphasizes project-based and interdisciplinary learning. By improving students' academic writing proficiency, the program equips them with communication and reasoning skills essential for success in both academic and professional settings. These skills are core components of 21st-century competencies that foster adaptability, collaboration, and innovation.

Ultimately, this writing workshop aspires to create an academic environment conducive to scientific literacy and intellectual growth. Students who master academic writing are better prepared to engage in research, publish scholarly work, and participate in academic discourse that contributes to the advancement of national and global knowledge.

B. Method

This community engagement program adopted the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes the active participation of all participants throughout the learning process; PAR was chosen because of its relevance to the main objective of the program-to develop students' academic writing skills through reflective and collaborative engagement between facilitators and participants. This approach allows for a continuous and cyclical process consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection, enabling an adaptive and contextual learning experience (Creswell, 2018). The PAR methodology ensures that the participants are not treated merely as subjects of instruction but as co-researchers who contribute meaningfully to the design and improvement of the program itself.

The activity was conducted in the main hall of the Institut Agama Islam (IAI) Ngawi, supported by Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII) Rayon Mahbub Djunaidi as an implementing partner. The choice of location was strategic because the institution has a strong academic culture and an existing network of student organizations actively involved in scholarly development.

A total of 150 participants took part in the program. They consisted of students from various academic departments, PMII cadres, and community members interested in developing their academic writing skills. The diverse composition of participants created a dynamic learning environment that enriched academic exchange and mutual learning (Sari & Fitria, 2023). The heterogeneity of participants-ranging from first-year students to senior undergraduates-allowed the facilitation of peer mentoring, where more experienced writers shared their approaches and challenges with beginners.

Throughout the implementation, the atmosphere was deliberately kept dialogical and participatory. Participants were actively involved in every stage of the program, including needs assessment, workshop activities, group discussions, and reflection sessions. The facilitator acted more as a learning partner than as a conventional instructor, ensuring that every voice was heard and valued. This collaborative ethos reflects the essence of PAR, where learning occurs through participation, reflection, and mutual empowerment.

The implementation of the activity consisted of three main cyclical stages: (1) needs identification, (2) training and writing practice, and (3) reflection and evaluation. Each phase was interconnected, allowing new insights gained from reflection to inform subsequent actions.

1. Needs Identification

The first phase focused on identifying participants' learning needs through direct observation and open discussions with students. The facilitators conducted informal interviews and focus group discussions to map the participants' prior experiences in academic writing. The preliminary findings indicated that most students lacked familiarity with the structure of a scientific paper, the use of APA citation style, and ethical considerations in academic writing (Hapsari & Lestari, 2022).

These findings became the basis for designing training materials tailored to participants' specific needs. The facilitators emphasized introducing the fundamental components of a research paper-such as the abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion-as well as proper referencing techniques using digital tools like Mendeley and Zotero. In addition, the facilitators integrated discussions on plagiarism awareness and academic integrity, as these are crucial in fostering responsible scholarship (Devlin & Gray, 2007).

This initial diagnostic phase is consistent with the PAR principle of co-construction of knowledge, where problems are identified collaboratively and solutions are developed collectively. It ensures that the learning process begins from participants' real contexts and concerns rather than from externally imposed curricula.

2. Training and Writing Practice

The second phase consisted of hands-on workshops and interactive writing sessions. The facilitators provided short lectures on academic writing conventions, paragraph organization, argument development, and the use of digital references. After the initial input session, participants were asked to compose the introduction section of an academic paper on a topic of their choice. This exercise allowed them to immediately apply newly acquired concepts while receiving direct feedback from facilitators and peers.

The sessions were designed to be dialogical and practice-oriented. Participants worked in small groups to exchange drafts and provide peer feedback based on structured rubrics. The collaborative peer-review process helped participants develop critical reading skills and refine their writing iteratively. According to Sagala (2021) and Gradini & Dhari (2025), practice-based and participatory learning models significantly improve both conceptual understanding and self-efficacy in academic writing.

During the workshop, digital literacy was also emphasized. Participants were trained to access credible academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and ResearchGate. They learned how to integrate sources into their writing while maintaining citation ethics. These sessions not only improved their writing mechanics but also fostered an understanding of research ethics and academic transparency.

Furthermore, the training stage incorporated short reflection breaks after each activity. Participants were encouraged to express difficulties they encountered, discuss possible solutions, and evaluate their progress. This approach aligns with Schön's (1983) notion of the reflective practitioner, where learning occurs through continuous reflection on action.

Figure 1. *Facilitators delivering material during the Scientific Paper Writing Training session at IAI Ngawi (Source: Author's documentation, 2025)*

3. Reflection and Evaluation

The third stage involved reflection and evaluation of participants' written outputs. Each participant presented their written drafts in small discussion groups and received constructive feedback from facilitators and peers. The evaluation was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, focusing on content quality, language use, coherence, and logical structure (Ardiani & Sari, 2021).

In addition to assessing individual progress, the reflection sessions served as opportunities for collective learning. Participants analyzed their writing processes, identified strengths and weaknesses, and formulated strategies for improvement. This reflective cycle strengthened participants' metacognitive awareness-an essential aspect of self-regulated learning.

Group reflections also nurtured a sense of ownership over the learning process. When participants viewed their writing development as a collaborative journey, they became more engaged and motivated to sustain the practice beyond the workshop (Rahmawati & Santoso, 2022). Facilitators concluded the sessions by summarizing key insights and inviting participants to formulate personal action plans for continuous improvement in academic writing.

To ensure the sustainability of the program's impact, the workshop also incorporated principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Within this framework, students were regarded as intellectual assets with inherent potential rather than as passive recipients of knowledge. The training emphasized recognizing and leveraging existing skills, motivation, and experiences to strengthen academic capacity.

For example, students who had prior exposure to organizational report writing or community project documentation were guided to adapt those experiences into formal academic writing. This asset-based approach encouraged confidence and self-reliance while promoting collaborative problem-solving among participants. Rather than focusing on deficiencies, the program celebrated participants' achievements and built upon them to generate new knowledge.

The integration of ABCD also aligns with the broader paradigm of higher education empowerment, which aims to enhance both individual and institutional capacities through participatory engagement (Ridwan & Fauzi, 2023).By positioning students as co-creators of

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knowledge, the program fostered a culture of autonomy, accountability, and sustained academic motivation.

The combination of PAR and ABCD methodologies created a synergistic and transformative framework for the program. PAR ensured that learning was participatory, reflective, and adaptive, while ABCD reinforced a positive orientation toward participants' strengths and capacities. Together, these approaches transformed the workshop from a one-time training activity into an ongoing educational process characterized by empowerment, collaboration, and critical reflection.

This methodological synthesis proved effective in promoting not only technical writing improvement but also the development of collaborative mindsets and reflective awareness among students. Participants reported higher confidence in producing academic papers and a stronger sense of belonging within the academic community. Thus, the program transcended the boundaries of technical training to become a transformative educational intervention that fostered independence, intellectual integrity, and sustainable academic engagement

C. Results and Discussion
1. Results

The implementation of the *Scientific Paper Writing Training* organized by *Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII) Rayon Mahbub Djunaidi* in collaboration with the *Institute of Islamic Religion (IAI) Ngawi* took place over two consecutive days and involved 150 participants consisting of university students from various study programs, PMII members, and members of the general public who shared an interest in developing academic writing skills. The event was carefully structured, beginning with an opening ceremony, followed by theoretical sessions, practical writing activities, and a closing reflection. This systematic design reflects the principles of *Participatory Action Research* (PAR), in which participants are actively involved in a cyclical process of action, reflection, and evaluation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Nugraha & Yuliani, 2021).

Overall, the training was conducted smoothly and received an overwhelmingly positive response from participants. Based on attendance records and field observations, the participation rate reached 95%, and more than 80% of participants actively engaged by asking questions, providing feedback, or sharing their thoughts during the discussions. Such high levels of involvement indicate that the participatory learning approach used in this program was effective in fostering an inclusive and collaborative learning atmosphere. This finding supports Sari and Fitria (2023) research, which concluded that participatory training enhances student enthusiasm and meaningful learning by positioning participants as active agents rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

The event opened with remarks from the IAI Ngawi leadership and PMII representatives, who emphasized the importance of academic literacy as a foundation for intellectual development. In the opening session, participants were invited to view academic writing as a meaningful contribution to scholarly discourse rather than merely a requirement for coursework. This conceptual reframing proved effective in building participants' early awareness of the role and value of scientific writing in higher education (Gradini & Dhari, 2025).

Figure 2*. Group photo of facilitators and participants in the Scientific Paper Writing Training held at IAI Ngawi (Source: Author's documentation, 2025)*

a. Writing Practice Outcomes

The writing practice phase served as the core component of the training. Participants were asked to draft the *introduction* section of a scientific paper based on an academic topic of their choice. Facilitators provided guidance on developing background issues, formulating research problems and objectives, and constructing a theoretical framework. Based on the facilitators' evaluation, approximately 70% of participants successfully produced logically structured introductions using appropriate academic language.

Nevertheless, several common weaknesses were identified, including inaccurate citation practices, insufficient literature review depth, and difficulty formulating precise research problems. To address these issues, facilitators conducted a series of small-group *peer review* sessions, allowing participants to exchange feedback and revise their drafts collaboratively. After receiving targeted guidance, the overall quality of participants' writing improved significantly—particularly in paragraph coherence, consistency of argumentation, and academic tone.

These results align with findings by Utami and Nurhayati (2020), who demonstrated that *guided writing practices* are more effective in improving academic writing skills than purely theoretical instruction. Participants who were directly involved in writing and reflection activities demonstrated a deeper understanding of academic text structure and greater confidence in articulating ideas using scientific reasoning.

b. Enhancement of Motivation and Academic Competence

Beyond technical improvements, the training also had a notable impact on participants' motivation and academic self-efficacy. According to post-activity survey data, 87% of participants reported feeling more prepared and confident to write academic papers after completing the training. Additionally, 82% stated they had gained a clearer understanding of APA 7th Edition citation guidelines and the principles of academic integrity.

These outcomes reinforce Mezirow (1997) *transformative learning theory*, which posits that meaningful learning occurs when individuals experience a shift in perspective. In this case, participants underwent a transformation in their perception of writing—from viewing it as a formal

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academic task to understanding it as an intellectual and reflective process. The change in mindset illustrates how reflective pedagogy can foster not only skill acquisition but also a renewed sense of scholarly identity.

Moreover, enthusiasm was evident during the final reflection session, where many participants expressed their intent to continue writing and submitting their papers to campus journals or student conferences. Some participants even proposed forming collaborative study groups to sustain their learning journey. This demonstrated that the program's impact extended beyond individual growth to encompass collective engagement and peer-driven motivation.

c. Social and Collective Impact

One of the most significant outcomes of the training was the establishment of an *Academic Writing Learning Community*, consisting of participants from different study programs. This community was voluntarily initiated by participants at the end of the training, with a shared commitment to organize monthly *writing clinics*. The purpose of this community is to provide a sustainable platform for sharing ideas, offering peer feedback, and cultivating a culture of academic literacy within the campus environment.

This initiative represents an important social achievement of the program, illustrating that the training successfully fostered a collaborative spirit and intellectual solidarity among participants. The emergence of this learning community reflects the core principles of *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD), which views students as intellectual assets capable of driving collective empowerment (Rahmawati & Santoso, 2022). Rather than treating participants as subjects in need of improvement, the program recognized and built upon their existing capacities, encouraging them to become agents of change within their academic ecosystem.

The establishment of this community also aligns with Dewi and Yusuf (2020) assertion that collaborative academic training can evolve into collective movements that strengthen the scholarly environment in higher education. Through sustained engagement, this community is expected to organize future academic initiatives such as journal writing workshops, research seminars, and publication mentoring sessions-thereby extending the long-term impact of the program beyond the initial training.

d. Reflection and Broader Implications

Reflections conducted jointly by facilitators and participants revealed three major impacts of the training. First, there was a significant improvement in participants' academic writing competence, particularly in formulating research backgrounds and constructing logical arguments. Second, participants experienced a positive transformation in attitude and motivation toward writing, now perceiving it as a critical and reflective intellectual practice. Third, the program fostered the creation of collaborative academic networks that contribute to the sustainability of scientific literacy on campus.

These findings also demonstrate the effectiveness of combining *Participatory Actio n Research* (PAR) and *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD). PAR encouraged active participation and critical reflection, while ABCD emphasized asset-based empowerment and positive engagement.

Together, these approaches produced a transformative learning experience-one that not only improved technical skills but also built independence, collaboration, and academic integrity.

In conclusion, the results of this community service program confirm that participatory, practice-based writing training can serve as an effective model for strengthening academic literacy and intellectual empowerment among university students. Furthermore, it highlights the strategic importance of collaboration between student organizations and academic institutions in building a vibrant, reflective, and research-oriented campus culture.

2. Discussion

The outcomes of the *Scientific Paper Writing Training* indicate that the activity not only succeeded in improving participants' technical academic writing skills but also contributed to a significant shift in students' learning paradigms. In the context of higher education, this transformation reflects a movement away from a *teacher-centered* learning model toward a *learner-centered* approach, in which students are positioned as active agents in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information (Biggs & Tang, 2011). This shift is particularly important in 21st-century education, which emphasizes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and academic communication competencies as essential attributes of university graduates.

Through this participatory and practice-based training, students experienced *meaningful learning*—a process where knowledge is not only acquired but also constructed through active engagement, reflection, and social interaction. As a result, the training contributed to cultivating a more dialogical and collaborative academic culture, in which participants learned to exchange ideas, critique constructively, and internalize the ethics of scholarly communication.

The effectiveness of the training can be explained through two major theoretical frameworks: *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) and *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD). These frameworks provided the philosophical and methodological foundations for the program's design and implementation, complementing each other in promoting engagement, empowerment, and reflection.

Participatory Action Research (PAR), as proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), emphasizes active involvement and collaboration between facilitators and participants across all stages of a program-planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Within this training, participants were not passive recipients of material but co-creators of the learning process. They contributed to the direction of the sessions through group discussions, interactive Q&A segments, and continuous feedback loops. This cyclic process of action and reflection created a dynamic, adaptive, and contextually relevant learning environment (Nugraha & Yuliani, 2021).

In contrast, the *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD) model (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) served as the philosophical foundation for viewing students as intellectual assets rather than as individuals deficient in skills or knowledge. The training adopted an asset-based perspective, recognizing that every participant possesses prior knowledge, experience, and potential that can be developed collaboratively. Through guided reflection and mentoring, facilitators encouraged students to identify and utilize their existing strengths as a basis for academic growth.

This approach proved particularly effective in fostering intrinsic motivation and self-confidence among participants. Rahmawati and Santoso (2022)assert that empowering learners through their own assets generates higher engagement and emotional investment in the learning process. Similarly, Ridwan and Fauzi (2023) found that ABCD-based strategies cultivate positive learning environments in Islamic higher education by promoting a sense of ownership, autonomy, and

social responsibility. Within this framework, the training became not merely a skill-development exercise but a process of intellectual empowerment rooted in students' collective potential.

The changes in participants' attitudes and motivation throughout the program can also be explained through Mezirow (1997) *Transformative Learning Theory*. According to this theory, meaningful learning occurs when individuals critically reflect on their prior assumptions, leading to a transformation in their perspectives. During the training, participants were encouraged to question their preconceived notions of academic writing-often viewed as a rigid or burdensome requirement- and to reconceptualize it as an expressive, creative, and intellectual endeavor.

Reflective discussions and peer-review sessions played a crucial role in facilitating this transformation. As participants shared their challenges and discoveries, they began to appreciate writing not merely as a mechanical process of fulfilling academic demands but as a medium for intellectual articulation and contribution to the scholarly community. This shift in perception signifies both cognitive and affective transformation, marking a deeper internalization of the value of academic writing. Such transformation is central to building sustainable academic literacy and cultivating reflective learners who can critically engage with ideas and communicate their reasoning effectively.

From a social and institutional perspective, the training reinforced the synergistic relationship between the *Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII)* as a student organization and the *Institute of Islamic Religion (IAI) Ngawi* as an academic institution. This collaboration reflects the *community–campus partnership* model described by Walidin et al., (2023), which underscores the importance of integrating student engagement with institutional support in community-based academic initiatives.

Through this partnership, PMII played a dual role—not only as a student organization focused on leadership and cadre development but also as an agent of intellectual empowerment promoting scientific literacy on campus. The collaboration illustrates how student organizations can extend their function beyond activism to become catalysts for academic growth and social change. It also demonstrates that academic empowerment does not solely rely on formal institutional structures but can emerge from student-driven initiatives that complement and enrich institutional objectives.

This synergy created a sustainable learning ecosystem where academic and organizational interests intersected in fostering a culture of inquiry, reflection, and community engagement. Such partnerships highlight the role of collective action in sustaining academic literacy movements within higher education, especially in Islamic universities that emphasize both intellectual and moral development.

The findings of this training have several significant implications for academic and institutional development. First, participatory, practice-based training can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing students' academic writing competence beyond formal coursework. Second, learner-centered models strengthen students' sense of ownership over their learning process, promoting collaborative learning and shared academic responsibility (Sagala, 2021). Third, the observed improvement in academic literacy highlights the strategic role of writing as an entry point for developing critical thinking and intellectual competitiveness in the digital era.

From a theoretical standpoint, the success of this initiative reaffirms the relevance of reflective and collaborative learning models within the context of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. As noted by Nasution & Azizah (2023), academic service learning and community-based educational

programs not only facilitate knowledge transfer but also nurture epistemological awareness, scholarly ethics, and intellectual accountability.

Consequently, the *Scientific Paper Writing Training* can be viewed as a dual-purpose academic empowerment model-one that simultaneously enhances individual technical competence and generates broader social and institutional impact. By fostering reflective thinking, collaborative engagement, and a shared commitment to scholarly integrity, the training has contributed meaningfully to the development of a sustainable academic culture.

D. Conclusion

The *Scientific Paper Writing Training Program* organized by the *Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII) Rayon Mahbub Djunaidi* in collaboration with the *Institut Agama Islam (IAI) Ngawi* successfully achieved its primary objective-enhancing students' academic competence in writing scholarly papers methodologically, logically, and reflectively. This success reflects the effectiveness of the combined methodological framework of *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) and *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD), both of which emphasize collaborative, participatory, and transformative learning.

The PAR approach enabled active participation at every stage of the program -from planning to implementation and reflection. Through cyclical processes of action and reflection, students were not passive recipients of knowledge but co-constructors of learning experiences based on their own academic contexts. Meanwhile, the ABCD framework emphasized the recognition and mobilization of existing student assets, viewing them as intellectual resources rather than subjects of deficiency. The integration of these two models produced a holistic training experience-one that was not only output-oriented but also process-oriented, emphasizing meaningful and empowering education.

Empirically, the outcomes of this training indicated a significant improvement in participants' academic writing abilities. Students demonstrated progress in understanding the structural components of scholarly writing, including background formulation, literature review organization, methodological explanation, and logical conclusion development. Furthermore, participants gained proficiency in applying the APA 7th Edition citation style and internalized academic ethics such as intellectual honesty, plagiarism avoidance, and responsible authorship.

Direct mentoring and peer feedback sessions proved highly effective in improving participants' critical thinking and argumentation skills. Students who initially struggled to structure their ideas coherently began to express their academic reasoning using precise scholarly language. Post-training evaluations revealed substantial improvement in coherence, analytical depth, and conceptual consistency across participants' drafts.

These findings affirm Mezirow (1997) theory of *transformative learning* and are consistent with the work of Gradini & Dhari (2025), which posits that critical reflection within the learning process generates cognitive and epistemic transformation. The participants shifted their perception of writing-no longer viewing it as a mere academic requirement but as an intellectual act of contribution to knowledge production. Hence, the training transcended technical skill development and fostered a deeper transformation in how students perceive, construct, and communicate scientific knowledge.

Beyond individual achievement, the training generated significant social and institutional impacts. The collaboration between PMII Rayon Mahbub Djunaidi and IAI Ngawi exemplified the integration of the *Tri Dharma of Higher Education*-teaching, research, and community service-into a

cohesive academic engagement model (Walidin et al., 2023).

PMII, traditionally known as a cadre-based student organization, repositioned itself through this program as a catalyst for academic literacy and scholarly engagement. This transformation expands the organization's function beyond leadership formation, establishing it as a vital contributor to academic development within the university. For IAI Ngawi, the collaboration strengthened the intellectual atmosphere of the campus, promoting interdepartmental cooperation and a culture of reflective learning.

Moreover, the initiative led to the establishment of the *Academic Literacy Community*-a peer-led group of training alumni committed to sustaining writing-related activities such as monthly writing clinics, journal publication mentoring, and scholarly discussion forums. This community represents a tangible outcome of the training, embodying the sustainability and collective ownership of learning outcomes. It also signifies that the program's success extends beyond short-term skill acquisition to the creation of an enduring intellectual ecosystem.

In the context of Islamic higher education, this outcome is particularly relevant. It aligns with the broader mission of cultivating intellectual traditions rooted in ethical responsibility, collaborative inquiry, and scholarly excellence. Conceptually, the success of this initiative offers several key implications for higher education development in Indonesia.

First, participatory and practice-based learning models proved far more effective than conventional, lecture-centered pedagogies. Students who engaged actively in discussion, peer review, and reflective exercises displayed deeper comprehension and stronger retention of knowledge. This aligns with Biggs and Tang (2011) framework of *constructive alignment*, which advocates for student-centered approaches that link learning outcomes with meaningful engagement.

Second, strengthening academic literacy emerges as a strategic entry point for improving the overall quality of human resources in higher education. The ability to write scientifically involves not only linguistic proficiency but also critical reasoning, logical structuring, and data-based argumentation-all of which form the foundation of intellectual competitiveness in the digital transformation era.

Third, the training underscores the importance of synergy among student organizations, faculty members, and educational institutions in nurturing a sustainable academic culture. Institutional partnerships of this nature foster inclusive, collaborative ecosystems of *knowledge empowerment*, resonating with Ridwan and Fauzi (2023) findings that asset-based learning encourages long-term academic self-sufficiency.

Additionally, from a policy perspective, the training model can be integrated into the institutional curriculum through modules such as *Academic Writing Skills* or *Research Methodology*. Embedding such programs within the curriculum not only enhances the academic profile of universities but also provides a structured pathway for continuous literacy development among students.

Based on the program outcomes and reflections, several recommendations can be drawn to enhance the sustainability of similar initiatives:

1. Program Continuation and Expansion: The training should be conducted regularly and extended to a wider scope, including regional and national participants. Such expansion would magnify the program's academic and social impact beyond IAI Ngawi, fostering inter-

university collaboration among Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia.

2. Advanced Academic Writing Assistance: Future iterations should focus on mentoring students in writing journal-ready manuscripts. Providing structured guidance for publication will help increase student research output and institutional visibility.

3. Integration of Digital Tools: Participants should be trained in using reference management tools such as Mendeley or Zotero, as well as plagiarism detection software. These tools will strengthen their academic integrity and efficiency in writing.

4. Enhancement of Scholarly Communication: Complementary training in *academic presentation and communication skills* should be incorporated to help students articulate their research findings effectively at seminars and conferences.

5. Sustained Institutional Collaboration: Universities should maintain close partnerships with student organizations to develop joint academic literacy initiatives. Establishing a *joint academic forum* could serve as an incubator for innovation, mentoring, and interdisciplinary scholarly dialogue.

In summary, the *Scientific Paper Writing Training Program* has successfully gone beyond improving students' technical writing abilities. It has laid the groundwork for cultivating a scientific culture and academic integrity — both of which are essential pillars of higher education-based community empowerment. This model should be regarded as a reference for future community service initiatives that aim to empower intellectual capabilities and strengthen the academic capacity of students across Indonesia.

Through this program, higher education institutions are reminded that writing is not merely an academic requirement, but a transformative process-a bridge between thought and contribution, between learning and societal progress. By nurturing reflective, productive, and ethical learners, universities can continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of scholars and nation-builders.

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