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# Improving the academic writing capacity of nursing students as a means of contributing to scholarly work

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**ABSTRACT** Academic writing is a fundamental skill that nursing students must develop to contribute effectively to the advancement of knowledge and evidence-based practice in healthcare. However, many students face challenges in organizing ideas, using appropriate scientific language, and understanding the structure of scholarly articles. This community service program aims to enhance nursing students' academic writing capacity through interactive workshops, hands-on mentoring sessions, and peer review activities. The program improves students' ability to select relevant topics, conduct literature reviews, formulate research questions, and adhere to scientific writing conventions. The program's outcomes include increased student confidence in writing, improved quality of academic manuscripts, and a greater interest in publication and academic discourse. This initiative is expected to foster a culture of research and scholarly communication among nursing students, ultimately contributing to their academic and professional development.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic writing skills are essential for nursing students, as they contribute significantly to developing evidence-based knowledge and practice in the health field (Salgado & Kumardhas, 2024). However, various studies show that many nursing students face challenges developing effective scientific writing skills. These difficulties include organizing ideas, using proper scientific language, and understanding scientific article structure. Structured interventions in the form of workshops and mentoring sessions can improve the academic writing skills of nursing students (Thornton et al., 2024). This approach improves the quality of scientific writing and increases student satisfaction in the thesis writing process (Lee et al., 2023). In addition, a genre-based approach has been applied to develop critical thinking skills through academic writing, showing significant improvements in students' analytical skills. Academic writing is essential to higher education, particularly in health-related disciplines such as nursing (Vortman et al., 2024). Writing scientifically enables students to express their ideas and research findings clearly and fosters critical thinking, professionalism, and evidence-based practice (Kuo, 2024). Nursing students are expected to develop the skills necessary to produce scholarly work, including research papers, literature reviews, and case studies, that

contribute to improving healthcare quality and patient outcomes (Suprapto et al., 2024).

Academic writing is an essential competency for nursing students, as it forms the foundation for engaging in evidence-based practice, conducting research, and contributing to scholarly discourse within the healthcare field (Gillespie et al., 2023). Despite its importance, many nursing students face challenges developing the necessary skills for effective scientific communication, including poor grammar, inadequate understanding of academic structures, and limited critical thinking abilities (Rejeb et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the ability to produce high-quality academic writing remains a common problem among undergraduate nursing students. This affects their academic performance and future roles as researchers and evidence-based practitioners (Gunawan et al., 2024). The lack of exposure to structured writing training, minimal guidance in literature review techniques, and a tendency to copy or plagiarize sources due to limited paraphrasing skills have further hindered students' potential to publish or even complete required scientific papers. Improving students' writing capacity requires a multifaceted approach that includes writing workshops, mentoring, and consistent feedback. Writing is not only a technical skill but also a cognitive and reflective process, which, when nurtured early, can significantly enhance students' academic confidence and critical reasoning (Zhang et al., 2025). Community service activities focusing on academic empowerment are critical in bridging the gap between curriculum objectives and students' capabilities. Through dedicated training programs, nursing students can be equipped with the tools and motivation to produce structured, original, and publishable academic work. This initiative also aligns with national higher education goals to promote research culture and publication among undergraduates (Bruce & Phetlhu, 2024).

Although various strategies have been implemented, there is still a need to develop more effective and sustainable methods for increasing the academic writing capacity of nursing students. Community service programs designed to provide intensive training, mentoring sessions, and peer review activities are expected to address these challenges effectively. These initiatives improve writing skills and foster a culture of research and scientific communication among nursing students, ultimately contributing to the development of professionalism and evidence-based nursing practice.

## 2. METHOD

Type of Activity. This activity is a training-based community service program that aims to improve the ability to write scientific papers for nursing students. The approach is participatory-educational, where students actively participate in the learning process through discussions, hands-on practice, and intensive mentoring. Location and Target. This program was conducted at the Nursing Study Program of the Sandi Karsa Polytechnic, with participants as many as 30 final-year students preparing their final projects or scientific papers. Implementation Time. The activity lasts 4 weeks, with a training schedule 2 times per week (each session lasts 2–3 hours).

Implementation Method. The implementation of the activity is carried out through the following stages: Identification of Participant Needs and pre-test of the initial ability of scientific writing. Training needs questionnaire. Training and Workshop. The material was delivered interactively with the following topics: Structure and format of scientific papers, Techniques for writing backgrounds, problem formulation and objectives, Literature search and citation (using

Mendeley/Zotero), Writing citations and bibliographies according to APA style, Review, and editing of scientific manuscripts, Practice, and Simulation; Participants were asked to make a draft of scientific papers based on their respective interests/topics. Practical session on the use of reference software and scientific writing tools. Mentoring and Feedback. Lecturers/mentors provide reviews and feedback on participants' drafts. Peer review between participants to improve the quality of writing. Program Evaluation. Post-test to measure the improvement of ability. Satisfaction questionnaire and learning reflection.

Data Collection Instruments. Pre-test and post-test academic writing ability. Observation sheet of participant participation and activeness. Rubric for the assessment of scientific papers. Participant satisfaction questionnaire with activities. Data Analysis. The data were analyzed descriptively, quantitatively, and qualitatively to see changes in writing skills before and after the training and participants' responses to the activity.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

The training activities for nursing students to write scientific papers have been carried out well according to plan. A total of 30 students actively participated in the entire series of programs consisting of pre-tests, workshops, practices, mentoring, and post-tests. The pre-test results showed that most participants (73%) had a limited fundamental understanding of scientific writing structure and techniques, especially using citations, writing logical backgrounds, and compiling bibliographies according to APA style.

Post-test results showed a significant improvement in writing ability, with 85% of participants achieving the "good" to "very good" category. As many as 90% of the participants succeeded in compiling a draft of a scientific paper with a complete structure and in accordance with academic rules. Based on the satisfaction questionnaire, 92% of participants stated that this activity was very beneficial and encouraged them to be more confident in writing and publishing scientific papers.

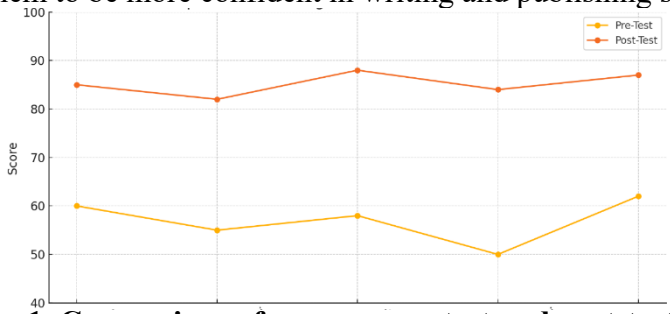


**Figure 1. Comparison of average pre-test and post-test scores**

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**Figure 2. Documentation of workshop scientific writing methods (KTI)**

Consisting of lecturers, presenters, and committees involved in the workshop implementation. All participants seemed to smile and showed a thumbs-up gesture as a symbol of enthusiasm and success of the activity. The room's atmosphere looks warm and family-friendly, reflecting the collaborative spirit in improving the scientific writing skills of nursing students.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this community engagement program demonstrate a significant improvement in the academic writing skills of nursing students after participating in a structured training and mentoring process. The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores reveals marked progress across key areas such as scientific structure, citation usage, academic language, referencing tools, and format compliance.

These findings align with prior research, emphasizing that focused academic writing interventions can significantly enhance students' writing confidence and competence (Yao et al., 2025). In this program, interactive workshops, practical sessions, and continuous feedback were proven effective in addressing common barriers faced by nursing students, such as difficulties in organizing arguments, integrating sources, and maintaining academic tone (Cole et al., 2025). Moreover, digital tools like Mendeley and Grammarly helped students manage references and edit their work more efficiently (Al-Tameemi et al., 2023), highlighting technology's role in supporting academic literacy development in health science education. Peer review sessions also positively influenced learning outcomes (Heaton-Shrestha et al., 2023). Students improved their drafts and developed a deeper understanding of academic standards and expectations by engaging in constructive critique and collaborative editing. These collaborative elements support the notion that learning is most effective when active, participatory, and contextually relevant (Godfrey et al., 2024).

The success of this initiative also provides insight into the importance of integrating academic writing support within the nursing curriculum (Muirhead et al., 2025). While short-term workshops are beneficial, establishing ongoing academic writing clinics or writing centers could further reinforce students' scholarly engagement and preparedness for future research or publication efforts. Nevertheless, some challenges remained (Ezzeddine et al., 2023). Time constraints and varying levels of initial writing ability among participants sometimes limited the depth of learning (Chooniedass et al., 2025). Therefore, a tiered approach to writing instruction, beginning in early semesters and continuing through graduation, may be

more sustainable and impactful in the long term. This program successfully fostered technical writing improvements and a culture of academic inquiry and scholarly contribution among nursing students. Such efforts are essential in preparing future nurses to be competent practitioners and active contributors to evidence-based healthcare (Xie et al., 2024).

Structured training in scientific writing can improve students' confidence and quality of writing. Significant improvements in participants' academic abilities show that practice-based approaches and mentoring effectively build scientific literacy among nursing students (Scoulas et al., 2025). This activity also solved common obstacles students often face, such as difficulty starting writing, lack of understanding of the scientific structure, and ignorance of using reference applications (Lammey et al., 2025). The success of this program strengthens the importance of peer review and feedback in improving the quality of academic writing (Cleary et al., 2023). In addition, this service is a strategic means to build a scientific culture in the student environment, which ultimately supports the improvement of the quality of nursing graduates who are not only competent in practice but also can contribute to the development of evidence-based science (Harmon Still et al., 2025). Challenges still arise, such as time constraints for students completing final projects and limitations of writing experience outside of a formal academic context. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a continuous training model that is integrated into the learning curriculum (Athilingam & He, 2024).

Moreover, the mentoring and peer-review components of the program proved highly beneficial. Participants received direct feedback from facilitators and learned through evaluating peers' drafts, encouraging critical thinking and collaborative learning (Gamboa et al., 2024). Peer engagement enhances students' sense of ownership and motivation in the academic writing process. However, some challenges emerged during the implementation. Time constraints due to students' final project deadlines limited the extent of writing revisions. Additionally, variations in baseline writing abilities required facilitators to apply differentiated strategies. These obstacles point to the need for longer-term interventions and the integration of writing support earlier in the academic curriculum.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This community service program successfully enhanced the academic writing capacity of nursing students through a structured and interactive training approach. The significant improvement in students' pre-test and post-test scores across all assessed aspects, such as structure, citation, academic language, and formatting, demonstrates the effectiveness of practical workshops, mentorship, and peer review strategies. The program strengthened technical writing skills and fostered a positive attitude toward scholarly communication and publication. By equipping students with the necessary tools and confidence to write scientifically, this initiative contributes to developing future healthcare professionals capable of producing evidence-based and impactful academic work. It is recommended that similar programs be conducted regularly and integrated into the nursing curriculum to ensure sustainable development of academic literacy. Long-term mentorship and early exposure to scientific writing should also be considered to maximize student outcomes.

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## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

All authors declare no conflict of interest in this community service program.

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