



Archives of Community Services

Journal homepage: <https://ojs.sci-media.com/index.php/acs/index>



Workshop on Academic Writing and Online Journal Submission for Senior Undergraduate Students

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 August 2025

Revised 28 August 2025

Accepted 2 September 2025

Keywords:

Online Journal System

Scientific Writing

Article Submission

ABSTRACT

This community service program was carried out with final-year Mechanical Engineering students of UM Metro as partners. The main problems identified were the students' lack of familiarity with the Online Journal System (OJS), limited knowledge of article submission procedures through OJS, and insufficient skills in writing scientific articles. The solutions offered included: introducing OJS and its stages in the journal publication process, training students to create author accounts in OJS, providing guidance on how to submit scientific articles through OJS, socializing the principles of scientific writing, and conducting training sessions on writing scientific articles. The results of the program showed that participants were able to recognize OJS and understand the stages of the publication process, successfully create author accounts, and submit scientific articles through OJS. In addition, students improved their ability to write scientific articles properly. Monitoring and evaluation were also conducted to ensure the sustainability of future activities and to further address the partners' challenges.

1. Introduction

Open Journal System (OJS) is an online platform for managing scientific journals that enables a transition from offline to online publishing. Through OJS, authors can submit manuscripts, track the review process, and follow the workflow until their articles are accepted and published. The system offers efficiency as it is paperless and is particularly suitable for Indonesia's vast geographical context [1,2].

The Indonesian government has launched various programs to enhance the quality and quantity of scientific publications by Indonesian researchers. One key strategy is to increase the number and quality of nationally accredited and internationally recognized journals. Consequently, scientific journals have shifted from print-based to electronic publishing. With this system, all stages of manuscript management: submission, editing, reviewing, and publishing, are conducted electronically through an application known as electronic journals (e-journals) [3,4]. Such systems also

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allow for faster indexing and citation tracking, which increases the visibility and impact of scientific work [5].

Furthermore, the Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI), through Circular Letter No. 152/E/T/2012 dated January 27, 2012, mandated that scientific publication is a graduation requirement for bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs [6,7]. Despite this policy, many undergraduate students, particularly in the Mechanical Engineering Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro, still struggle with scientific writing skills, even after completing research methodology courses. In addition, they lack knowledge of journal publishing systems, most of which now rely on OJS as the standard platform recognized by the government [8,9].

Based on this situation, a training program was designed to address these challenges by improving students' competence in writing scientific articles and submitting them for publication in both national and international journals.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants in this program were final-year students of the Mechanical Engineering Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro. They were selected as partners because of their limited knowledge of the Online Journal System (OJS) and lack of skills in writing and submitting scientific articles, despite having completed research methodology courses.

2.2. Procedure

The program was implemented in several structured stages:

1. Discussion and Coordination

The initial stage involved discussions between the service team and student partners. This stage aimed to socialize the work plan, coordinate schedules, and determine the steps of implementation.

2. Problem Identification

Information was gathered directly from the students regarding the difficulties they faced in scientific writing and OJS

usage. This ensured the program addressed actual challenges experienced by the participants.

3. Introduction to OJS

Students were introduced to the OJS platform and its role in the publication process. The stages of submission, review, editing, and publication were explained to provide a clear conceptual understanding.

4. Training on Article Submission

Hands-on training was conducted, enabling students to create author accounts and practice submitting scientific articles through OJS. This stage emphasized practical application and active participation.

5. Scientific Writing Workshop

Students received training in writing scientific articles according to academic standards. They prepared draft manuscripts and directly practiced writing under the guidance of the facilitators.

2.3. Tools and Materials

The program utilized the OJS platform as the main tool for training. Supporting materials included guidelines for OJS submission, scientific writing templates, and examples of published articles to illustrate good writing practices.

2.4. Partner Participation

Active involvement of the students was a key factor in the success of the program. They participated in all stages, provided input during problem identification, practiced directly in OJS training, and prepared draft materials for the writing workshop. This participatory approach ensured that students not only gained knowledge but also developed practical skills applicable to their future academic requirements.

3. Result and Discussion

The program was successfully implemented despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to health protocols and

government regulations prohibiting large gatherings, the socialization and training sessions were conducted online via the Zoom application. The training took place on May 14, 2020, from 10:00 to 12:00 WIB, with a total of 24 student participants from several universities, the majority of whom were final-year students of the Mechanical Engineering Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro. Invitations to the seminar were distributed through the WhatsApp application.

3.1. Improved Knowledge of OJS

The participants gained a clear understanding of the Online Journal System (OJS) and the stages of the publication process, including submission, review, editing, and final publication. This was a significant improvement compared to their initial unfamiliarity with the system.

3.2. Author Account Creation and Submission Skills

All participants successfully created author accounts within OJS and practiced submitting scientific articles through the platform. As a result, they acquired both knowledge and practical skills necessary for article submission, which directly addressed their initial lack of technical competence.

3.3. Enhanced Scientific Writing Competence

The workshop on scientific writing provided participants with the ability to draft articles according to proper academic standards. Students practiced preparing manuscripts and demonstrated improved structure, language, and adherence to scientific writing conventions. Moreover, they were introduced to strategies for increasing the acceptance chances of their manuscripts in OJS-based journals.

3.4. Active Participation and Engagement

Student engagement was evident throughout the program. Participants actively joined discussions, provided feedback during problem identification, and engaged in hands-on practice. The online format did not reduce participation; instead, it allowed students from multiple institutions to attend and learn together.

3.5. Sustainability and Follow-Up

Monitoring and evaluation revealed that students were motivated to continue applying the skills they had gained. Their increased familiarity with OJS and enhanced writing ability are expected to support their future academic requirements, particularly the graduation mandate for scientific publication. The outcomes suggest that online training can serve as an effective model for similar programs in the future.

Figures 1–4 show the overall activities of the community service program, including socialization, problem identification, OJS training, and scientific writing workshops.



Figure 1. Problem identification discussion between the service team and participants.

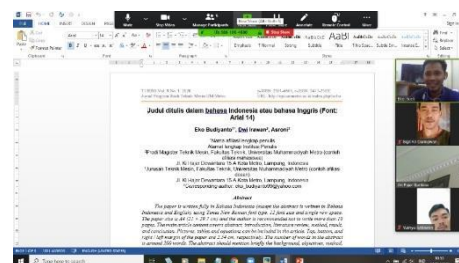


Figure 2. Scientific writing workshop where students practiced drafting manuscripts.



Figure 3. Training session on creating author accounts and submitting articles through OJS.



Figure 4. Active participation of students during the Q&A and feedback session.

The results of this program demonstrate that structured training in the use of the Online Journal System (OJS), combined with workshops on scientific writing, can significantly enhance the competence of final-year students in preparing and submitting scientific articles. Prior to the activity, most participants had little to no knowledge of OJS or the submission process. After the training, all participants successfully created author accounts, understood the workflow of journal publication, and practiced submitting manuscripts. This finding aligns with previous studies that highlight the importance of OJS as a platform that simplifies and standardizes the publication process in Indonesia's higher education system [1,2].

The improvement in students' scientific writing skills also reflects the effectiveness of integrating writing workshops with technical training on OJS. Many undergraduate students, even after completing research methodology courses, often struggle with transforming research results into publishable articles. The workshop provided practical guidance on article structure, language use, and strategies to meet journal requirements, thereby addressing this gap. This is consistent with national policies from the Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI), which require scientific publication as a prerequisite for graduation at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels [7]. Without adequate training, students may face significant delays in completing their studies due to difficulties in meeting these requirements.

The adaptation of the program to an online format due to the Covid-19 pandemic further emphasizes the flexibility and accessibility of

digital learning methods. Despite initial concerns, the use of Zoom and WhatsApp allowed the program to reach not only students from Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro but also participants from other universities. This expanded reach indicates that online platforms can effectively facilitate collaborative learning and community service activities across institutions.

Another important aspect was the active participation of students throughout the sessions. Engagement during discussions, problem identification, and hands-on practice highlights the importance of participatory approaches in community service. When participants are actively involved, they are more likely to internalize new knowledge and skills, which supports long-term sustainability of the outcomes.

Overall, this program confirms that targeted training in OJS and scientific writing can directly address the barriers faced by final-year students in fulfilling publication requirements. It also illustrates that online delivery methods, necessitated by the pandemic, can be effectively leveraged to broaden participation and ensure continuity of academic development programs.

4. Conclusion

This community service program successfully addressed the challenges faced by final-year students of the Mechanical Engineering Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro, in understanding and applying the Online Journal System (OJS) and in developing scientific writing skills. Through structured stages of discussion, problem identification, OJS introduction, submission training, and writing workshops, students gained knowledge of the journal publication process, created author accounts, practiced article submission, and improved their ability to write scientific articles according to academic standards.

The adaptation to online delivery via Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic proved effective, enabling participation not only from UM Metro students but also from students of other universities. Active engagement throughout the

sessions ensured that participants were not only recipients of information but also active learners.

The outcomes of this program demonstrate that practical training in OJS and scientific writing can help students fulfill academic publication requirements, thereby supporting timely graduation. For sustainability, similar programs should be conducted regularly, with broader institutional collaboration, to further strengthen students' publication readiness and contribute to the improvement of scientific output in Indonesia.

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