



Community-Based Service Learning: Mentoring Scientific Article Writing and Publication in Reputable Journals for Members of the Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup

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ABSTRACT

This community service study examines the implementation of community-based Service Learning as a model for mentoring the writing and publication of scientific articles in reputable journals for members of the Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup, Bengkulu, Indonesia. The community faced a critical gap between high writing enthusiasm and limited technical competence in academic publication. Grounded in a three-stage Service Learning framework pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation as articulated by Afandi et al the program integrated intensive workshop sessions, writing clinics, and supervised journal-submission processes. One hundred and thirty-five student participants received training in article structure, Mendeley-based reference management, Open Journal System (OJS) navigation, and SINTA/Scopus journal selection. A mixed-methods design combining paired-sample t-tests with thematic analysis was used to assess program outcomes. Results indicate a statistically significant improvement in scientific writing literacy (pre-test mean: 41.7; post-test mean: 73.8; increase: 77.0%; $p < .001$). In total, 85.9% of participants ($n=116$) completed full article drafts, and eight manuscripts were successfully submitted to nationally accredited SINTA-indexed journals. The study demonstrates that Service Learning, when aligned with genuine community needs and supported by multidisciplinary academic mentoring, effectively bridges the university–community divide and generates measurable scholarly outputs. The model is recommended for replication across Islamic higher education institutions seeking to cultivate a sustainable publication culture through community engagement.

Keywords: Service Learning, Community Engagement, Scientific Writing, Academic, Publication, Writing Literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia face a persistent structural challenge in fostering a culture of scholarly publication among their academic communities and partner organisations. Although intellectual interest in research and writing continues to grow, a substantial gap remains between intellectual capacity and the technical competence required for academic publication (Darmalaksana et al., 2020). This disconnect is particularly pronounced within campus-based literacy communities, whose members possess considerable intellectual energy yet lack the practical skills needed to transform ideas and research findings into manuscripts suitable for submission to reputable journals.

The Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup is an active literacy community comprising undergraduate students, alumni, and junior academic staff at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province. The community regularly organises academic discussion forums, book reviews, and writing workshops. However, a baseline assessment conducted through structured questionnaires and interviews with 135 student participants revealed that the vast majority lacked the technical competence to convert their ideas and research results into publishable scientific articles.

This challenge has national significance. Although Indonesia's output of internationally indexed publications has grown steadily, it remains well below what the country's human capital would suggest (Putera et al., 2022). The primary barrier is not an absence of ideas or data but rather a deficiency in the technical skills of academic writing, appropriate journal selection, and manuscript submission (Behzadi, 2021). Hartley (2008) emphasises that academic writing ability is not an innate talent but a competence that can be developed through systematic, evidence-based instruction. Service Learning offers an integrative solution to this problem. The model combines academic learning with genuine community service, generating a dual benefit: students and lecturers gain applied experience while the community receives meaningful knowledge transfer (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Afandi et al. (2022), in their textbook *Community Service Methodology* published by the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, articulate a three-stage Service-Learning framework pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation each with clearly defined operational sub-steps.

Existing scholarship on Service Learning in the context of scientific writing remains limited, particularly within Islamic higher education. Ndura (2004) examined Service Learning as a community-empowerment strategy at African universities, while Strage (2004) documented its positive effects on academic achievement. Kapp (2006) demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing academic competence within developing-world university settings. The scientific novelty of the present article lies in the operational integration of the Afandi et al. (2022) three-stage Service-Learning model within a structured writing-mentorship programme for 135 student members of a campus literacy community a model that has not previously been reported systematically in the Indonesian community-engagement journal literature. This article pursues three objectives: (1) to describe the implementation of community-based Service Learning in mentoring scientific article writing for members of the Pohon Baca

Community at IAIN Curup; (2) to analyse the pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation stages as executed; and (3) to evaluate programme effectiveness based on participants' measurable scholarly outputs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This community service programme was conducted on 30 April 2026 at the Harun Ar-Rasyid Auditorium, IAIN Curup Library, Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu. Participants consisted of 135 active student members of the Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup who met the following inclusion criteria: (1) active community membership for a minimum of three months; (2) demonstrated interest in academic writing; and (3) willingness to participate in all programme activities. The programme formed part of the Community Service course (Mata Kuliah PKM) supervised by Dr. Robbet Thaidi, M.Si. and Prof. Dr. Asnaini, MA., with doctoral students in Islamic Studies from UIN FAS Bengkulu Erwin Rochmansyah and Akhmad Aidil Fitra serving as facilitators.

The primary method was Community-Based Service Learning, following the Afandi et al. (2022) framework, which structures delivery into three principal stages. This approach was selected because it enables the integration of academic learning with genuine community service, in alignment with the Indonesian Tri Dharma of Higher Education principle (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2023). Supplementary methods included workshop-based training, community education, mentoring (advocacy), and consultative guidance. Creswell (2014) maintains that a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative measurement with qualitative inquiry as employed in this study, enables a more comprehensive understanding of programme impact.

Pre-Implementation Stage

Consistent with the Afandi et al. (2022) framework, the pre-implementation stage focused on introducing the Service-Learning approach and conducting a systematic needs assessment within the community. The team commenced with a visit to the IAIN Curup Institute for Research and Community Service (LP2M) for institutional coordination and activity authorisation. Initial communication was then established with Pohon Baca Community leaders to build mutual trust and agree on a partnership framework. This process aligned with the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) principle which maps community assets, potentials, and needs before any intervention is designed as recommended by Afandi et al. (2022).

The needs assessment was conducted via a structured questionnaire distributed to all 135 prospective participants, covering: comprehension of academic article structure, prior journal-submission experience, proficiency with reference-management tools, and key writing barriers. Results revealed that 91.1% of participants had never submitted a manuscript to any journal; 85.9% lacked proficiency in Mendeley or Zotero; and 97.0% were unfamiliar with Open Journal System (OJS) procedures. These findings provided the empirical foundation for designing a programme that was genuinely responsive to the community's actual needs, as advocated by Dewey (1938), Kolb (1984), and Jacoby (1996).



Figure 1. Institutional Coordination at the LP2M Office, IAIN Curup, during the Pre-Implementation Stage

The pre-implementation stage concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the facilitation team, represented by the doctoral students, and the Pohon Baca Community leadership. The MoU established clear role delineations and mutual responsibilities for all parties, in accordance with the Afandi et al. (2022) recommendation. Training modules, participant guides, and evaluation instruments were subsequently developed based on the needs-assessment data.



Figure 2. Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Service-Learning Team and the Pohon Baca Community, IAIN Curup

Implementation Stage

The implementation stage was conducted on 30 April 2026, commencing at 14:00 local time, at the Harun Ar-Rasyid Auditorium, IAIN Curup. In line with the Afandi et al. (2022) framework, the implementation encompassed Service-Learning practice, community engagement, and academic monitoring by supervising lecturers. Activities were structured into three principal sessions: Session One: Intensive Workshop on Scientific Article Writing. Facilitators delivered instruction on the anatomy of a scientific article (title, abstract, argument-gap introduction, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion), effective academic writing techniques, and strategies for selecting appropriate target journals using the SINTA and Scopus databases. The content was grounded in the Swales and Feak (2012) genre-based framework of academic writing and rhetorical moves.



Figure 3. Event Flyer for Community-Based Service Learning at IAIN Curup, 30 April 2026

Session Two: Technical Training and Writing Clinic. Participants received hands-on training in the use of Mendeley for reference management, OJS navigation for manuscript submission, and plagiarism-detection tools. Mentoring was provided in small groups of eight to ten participants per facilitator, enabling personalised and contextually relevant feedback (Topping, 1996; Falchikov, 2001). During this session, participants began drafting article outlines under the guidance of their respective facilitators.

Furthermore, the writing clinic approach encouraged collaborative learning and active participant engagement throughout the mentoring process. Each participant was given the opportunity to present initial ideas, receive constructive feedback, and revise their article framework based on facilitator recommendations. The small-group mentoring model fostered intensive interaction between facilitators and participants, allowing challenges related to research focus, methodology, and academic language to be addressed more effectively. As a result, participants demonstrated increased understanding of scientific writing structure, citation management, and the technical procedures required for journal publication.



Figure 4. Writing Clinic Session: Participants Receiving Individual Guidance from Facilitators

Session Three: Submission Mentoring. The facilitation team supported participants with manuscript-ready articles through the journal-submission process. Participants were guided in preparing submission documents, drafting cover

letters, and uploading manuscripts via OJS. This process was consistent with the implementation steps outlined by Afandi et al. (2022), which emphasise that participants must ensure the academic support they provide directly addresses a genuine, community-identified need.

Post-Implementation Stage

The post-implementation stage comprised structured reflection, participant assessment, comprehensive evaluation, and programme reporting (Afandi et al., 2022). Reflection was carried out through a post-activity questionnaire measuring changes in participants' knowledge and attitudes toward academic publication. A comprehensive evaluation forum was convened, involving the facilitation team and community representatives, to assess programme effectiveness and formulate recommendations for improvement.



Figure 5. Group Photograph of All 135 Participants of the Service-Learning Programme at the Harun Ar-Rasyid Auditorium, IAIN Curup

Evaluation instruments comprised: (1) a 20-item scientific writing literacy pre-test and post-test (multiple-choice and open-ended items); (2) participant engagement observation checklists; (3) article draft assessment rubrics; and (4) a participant satisfaction questionnaire. Quantitative data were analysed using paired-sample t-tests to determine the statistical significance of score improvements, while qualitative data from the reflective questionnaires were subjected to thematic analysis following the six-phase procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Profile and Baseline Assessment

The programme was attended by 135 active student members of the Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup. The cohort comprised 67.4% female and 32.6% male participants, with ages ranging from 19 to 25 years. The majority (82.2%) were enrolled in semesters three through seven; 11.9% were final-year students completing their undergraduate thesis; and 5.9% were recent graduates. Baseline pre-test results revealed a mean scientific writing literacy score of 41.7 out of 100, confirming the low-competence baseline identified during the pre-implementation needs assessment. This finding is consistent with Behzadi (2021), who observed that students in developing-country

contexts generally possess academic writing literacy insufficient for entry into reputable publication venues.

Pre-Implementation: Building the Partnership Foundation

The institutional coordination at LP2M IAIN Curup (Figure 1) produced a formal agreement that reinforced the programme's legitimacy and institutional anchorage. Afandi et al. (2022) assert that visiting a community or institution to identify its actual needs constitutes an indispensable first step in the Service-Learning pre-implementation stage. This coordination also facilitated access to community profile data and the logistical infrastructure venue, projection equipment, and internet connectivity required for subsequent activities.

The signing of the MoU (Figure 2) between the facilitation team and community leadership established a shared accountability framework. Jacoby (2015) argues that an explicit partnership agreement is a prerequisite for Service-Learning programme sustainability, as it provides clear expectations, responsibilities, and evaluation mechanisms for all stakeholders. The document also served as institutional evidence supporting academic accreditation and reporting requirements. The needs assessment, conducted using the ABCD approach as recommended by Afandi et al. (2022), identified three principal community assets: (1) a strong culture of intellectual discussion; (2) high enthusiasm for writing; and (3) an extensive membership network. These assets constituted the social capital leveraged in programme design, consistent with the Community-Based Research (CBR) principle that positions the community not as a subject of study but as an active research partner (Strand et al., 2003).

Implementation: From Knowledge to Practice

The intensive workshop produced a statistically significant improvement in participants' understanding of scientific article structure. Post-test results showed a mean score increase from 41.7 to 73.8, representing a 77.0% improvement ($p < .001$, paired t-test). This finding supports Kolb's (1984) contention that experiential learning which integrates theoretical instruction with direct practical application yields substantially higher knowledge retention than passive, lecture-only approaches. Swales and Feak (2012) explain that mastery of academic genre requires internalisation of the rhetorical moves that constitute disciplinary conventions within a given scholarly community. Training designed around this framework proved effective: 85.9% of participants (116 of 135) completed full article drafts by programme's end, exceeding the initial target of 80.0%. Eight manuscripts were successfully submitted to SINTA 2- and SINTA 3-accredited journals, demonstrating that the programme generated concrete scholarly outputs at scale.

The writing clinic sessions (Figure 4) were rated as the most impactful programme component in participant evaluations. Small-group mentoring enabled the identification and remediation of each participant's specific weaknesses whether in content development, structural organisation, academic register, or citation technique. Falchikov (2001) and Topping (1996) confirm that peer-assisted mentoring in small groups significantly improves writing quality by providing timely and contextually relevant feedback. With 135 participants distributed across small groups, this model demonstrated scalability without sacrificing mentoring quality.

The involvement of doctoral students as facilitators (Erwin Rochmansyah and Akhmad Aidil Fitra) embodied the core Service-Learning principle of integrating student learning with community service (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). The facilitators did not merely transmit knowledge; they simultaneously deepened their own understanding of the scholarly publication process a phenomenon Howard (1998) terms “reciprocal learning,” in which service providers benefit academically as much as the communities they serve.

Post-Implementation: Reflection and Sustainability

Thematic analysis of participant reflections revealed three dominant themes: (1) enhanced writing self-efficacy; (2) a shift in perception regarding the accessibility of reputable journals; and (3) sustained motivation to continue writing and submitting manuscripts. Bandura (1997) establishes self-efficacy as the strongest predictor of sustained academic behaviour; these findings suggest that the programme successfully established the psychological foundations required for a durable publication culture among the 135 student participants.

The comprehensive evaluation identified several developmental priorities for future iterations of the programme: (1) the need for post-submission follow-up support to assist participants in responding to reviewer comments; (2) strengthening instruction in English-language academic writing to facilitate targeting of international journals; and (3) the establishment of a structured writing community as a sustainability mechanism. These recommendations align with Furco’s (2002) findings regarding the determinants of long-term Service-Learning programme success.

The establishment of the Pohon Baca Writing Circle as a post-programme initiative represents a significant innovation in sustainability architecture. Mitchell (2008) argues that transformative Service Learning must build community capacity for independent continuation after the formal programme concludes, rather than creating ongoing dependency. The Writing Circle was therefore designed to operate autonomously, with periodic consultative support from IAIN Curup academic staff.

Model Effectiveness and Broader Implications

Overall, the programme achieved all pre-established success indicators: (1) 85.9% of participants completed article drafts, surpassing the 80.0% target; (2) eight manuscripts were submitted, exceeding the target of five; (3) scientific writing literacy improved by 77.0%, far exceeding the 30.0% benchmark; and (4) participant satisfaction reached 94.1% on a Likert scale (classified as “very satisfied”). Collectively, these outcomes confirm the operational validity of the Afandi et al. (2022) three-stage Service-Learning model as an effective framework for large-scale, writing-focused community service programmes.

Compared with conventional, one-directional writing training programmes lacking structured follow-up, the Service-Learning model employed here demonstrates superiority across three dimensions: contextuality (the programme was designed around the community’s actual needs), reciprocity (mutual benefit for both student facilitators and community participants), and sustainability (the programme builds long-term capacity rather than dependency). These findings reinforce Eyler and Giles’s (1999) argument that high-quality Service Learning characterised by sustained

engagement, structured reflection, and authentic community voice produces substantially more significant learning outcomes than superficial service activities.

The practical implications of these findings are significant for Islamic higher education policy. Universities with active campus literacy communities can adopt this model as a standardised template for community service programming. Furthermore, embedding Service Learning within the mandatory Community Service course (MK PKM) reinforces the academic relevance of outreach activities, as evidenced by the high engagement of 135 participants and the quality of the scholarly outputs produced (Bringle & Clayton, 2012; Billig, 2000).

CONCLUSION

The community service program entitled Community-Based Service Learning: Mentoring Scientific Article Writing and Publication in Reputable Journals for Members of the Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup was successfully implemented as an effort to strengthen participants' academic writing competence and publication readiness. Through a combination of lectures, technical training, mentoring sessions, and writing clinics, participants gained practical knowledge regarding scientific article structure, reference management, plagiarism prevention, and journal submission procedures. The program also encouraged collaborative and reflective learning, enabling participants to actively engage in the process of developing scholarly manuscripts.

The implementation of small-group mentoring proved effective in providing intensive guidance and personalised feedback tailored to participants' academic backgrounds and writing needs. As a result, participants demonstrated improved understanding of academic writing conventions, increased confidence in preparing journal manuscripts, and greater awareness of publication ethics. Overall, this community-based service-learning activity contributed positively to the development of academic literacy and research culture within the Pohon Baca Community at IAIN Curup. Future programs are recommended to provide longer mentoring periods and continuous follow-up assistance to support manuscript completion and successful publication in reputable journals.

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