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Strengthening Classroom Action Research and Scientific Writing Competencies among Vocational Teachers through an Integrated Community Engagement Workshop

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ABSTRACT

Vocational teachers need practical guidance to connect classroom problems with defensible research designs and scientific writing. This community engagement program documented an integrated workshop at SMK Karsa Mulya Palangka Raya, Indonesia, on 22 September 2026. The participatory workshop combined contextual cases, research-design discussion, guided manuscript exercises, and short-term evaluation. The materials addressed research foundations, distinctions among classroom action research (CAR), experimental and research-and-development designs, data and instruments, manuscript structure, and references. Fourteen coded evaluation sets were available; 13 included complete paired knowledge tests and 10 contained analyzable satisfaction responses. Mean test scores changed descriptively from 14.15 to 15.62 of 20; mean satisfaction was 3.99 of 5. Implemented outputs comprised teaching materials, workshop documentation, assessment instruments, and an evaluation workbook; mentoring logs and manuscript-review trackers were prepared for follow-up. The results describe initial engagement rather than a validated or causal improvement in publication competence. The program highlights the need to move beyond one-day conceptual exposure through planned, evidence-tracked writing clinics focused on participants' actual drafts.

Keywords: academic writing; classroom action research; community engagement; workshop; vocational teachers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vocational teachers confront practice-based problems involving workshop safety, practical skills, learning resources, and the fit between classroom activities and occupational requirements. Turning such problems into shareable evidence requires more than learning the format of a journal article: teachers must specify the problem, identify a feasible unit of inquiry, select an appropriate design, and decide what evidence can support their claims. Classroom action research (CAR) is suited to iterative improvement within a teaching setting through planning, action, observation, and reflection; experimental designs instead address questions about the effects of an intervention under specified comparison conditions; educational research and development (R&D) places emphasis on designing and evaluating a product. These approaches cannot be treated as interchangeable, because the design determines what counts as evidence and what may responsibly be concluded (Manfra, 2019; Murwaningsih & Fauziah, 2022). For a CAR project, the proposed action and its expected change should follow a well-defined practical problem rather than precede it. This fit between professional questions and research logic matters especially in vocational education, where equipment, teaching settings, and student practice vary across contexts (Setiawan et al., 2025).

The theoretical rationale draws on teacher professional learning rather than the assumption that attending a workshop is equivalent to acquiring durable expertise. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), Desimone and Pak (2017), and Kennedy (2016) emphasize active learning, practice, feedback, and mechanisms that support enactment. A meta-analytic framework by Sims et al. (2025) further distinguishes mechanisms for building insight, motivating change, developing usable techniques, and embedding practice. The present workshop could plausibly support introductory insight and technique awareness, but the longer-term embedding of research and writing routines would require later evidence from teachers' work. Importantly, Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) caution against treating familiar characteristics such as duration or collaboration as automatic guarantees of effective professional development; instructional mechanisms and implementation quality must be examined. Bergmark (2023) likewise

locates teachers' research learning in context-specific, teacher-driven inquiry and collaboration, strengthening the case for working from genuine vocational teaching problems instead of generic manuscript templates.

Existing Indonesian service initiatives have trained vocational teachers in academic writing, classroom research, and journal submission. Workshop-based programs have introduced paper structure, academic language, reference conventions, and journal procedures (Dwijayanti et al., 2017; Fathurohman et al., 2020; Adi et al., 2021). Programs involving writing practice and manuscript development report that examples and facilitator assistance help participants organize their work (Prihatni et al., 2023; Susanto, 2023; Rahim et al., 2023). More specialized efforts target citation management and navigating journal submission systems (Relawati et al., 2024; Rianto et al., 2024). This literature does not imply that integrated programs are unprecedented; rather, it establishes a recurring challenge of linking research decision-making, writing practice, and evidence of follow-through. Participatory CAR and teacher research mentoring have likewise been documented in school-level programs, although their settings and completion criteria differ (Yohana et al., 2022; Listiaji et al., 2023).

The operational difficulty is that a short workshop can cover research-design distinctions and manuscript architecture without establishing whether teachers can independently revise instruments, interpret data, or complete articles. In Surakarta, individual support remained necessary after teachers had draft papers (Estriyanto et al., 2023); other programs have used extended consultations or product-focused mentoring (Mardhiah et al., 2024; Samsilayurni et al., 2024; Chairani, 2025; Nugroho et al., 2025). The broader literature supports attention to feedback and authentic outputs, although findings obtained in other settings should not be transferred to this school without evidence (Kraft et al., 2018; Makhmetova et al., 2025). The practical gap addressed here is therefore not the absence of teacher-writing workshops, but the need to make the connection from locally identified vocational problems to justified research designs, manuscript guidance, and traceable next-step products explicit within a community-engagement initiative.

SMK Karsa Mulya Palangka Raya partnered with the Department of Mechanical Engineering Education, Universitas Palangka Raya, to respond to uneven familiarity with research methods, instruments, and scientific writing. Instead of isolating article formatting as the starting point, the local program introduced research foundations, compared CAR, experimental and R&D purposes, and then demonstrated how a coherent problem, method, evidence, and reference trail should appear in a manuscript. The contribution reported in this article is a documented service sequence and partner participation, accompanied by descriptive feedback and resources for later product-based assistance. It does not claim to establish a new validated teaching model or demonstrate that publications were achieved after the event. A related empirical analysis of the workshop evaluation is separate from this implementation-focused report.

Accordingly, the community engagement objectives were to: (1) introduce a research process grounded in classroom and workshop problems and explain fit-for-purpose selection among CAR, experimental, and R&D designs; (2) support teachers' initial understanding of data, instruments, article architecture, and citation practices; (3) conduct participatory examples and guided exercises with program evaluation; and (4) prepare a documented, product-oriented mentoring route for needs not resolved during the workshop. These objectives concern workshop delivery and preparation for follow-up, not a tested hypothesis of causal training effectiveness.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The service program took place on 22 September 2026 in the computer laboratory of SMK Karsa Mulya Palangka Raya, Jalan G. Obos Km. 5 No. 130, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. Lecturers and students from the Department of Mechanical Engineering Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya, delivered the activity in cooperation with the partner school. The school facilitated participation and facilities, and its principal opened the workshop. Implementation used a participatory sequence of case-based presentations, guided practice, discussion, and a closing evaluation. The program was organized through an official university assignment letter; its immediate purpose was professional capacity building, not experimental causal inference.

Needs identification drew on the program brief, vocational-teaching context, available information about the partner, and questions raised during the workshop. The priority was to connect an actual classroom/workshop challenge to a researchable question, a feasible design, appropriate instruments, and an intelligible manuscript structure. Three content strands were prepared: Research Foundations and Discovery; Classroom Innovation

Blueprint (CAR, experimental and R&D distinctions, sources of evidence, and interpretation); and STEAM Engineering Manuscript Architecture (sections, tables, citation and references). The program did not presume that CAR was suitable for every issue, and the selection exercise emphasized the consequences of the choice of design for instruments and defensible claims.

The recorded workflow comprised preparation, delivery, evaluation/documentation, and planning of further assistance. The team prepared learning materials, facilitation notes, a 20-item knowledge pre-test and a different-worded 20-item post-test organized around the same domains, and a 15-item satisfaction form with three open-ended questions. Workshop activities began with registration and initial evaluation, continued through design-selection cases and manuscript examples, and ended with a post-test and participant feedback. Table 1 distinguishes what occurred during the event from resources prepared for later coaching. The subsequent mentoring clinics in this report are proposed activities: the available records do not establish their completion or outcomes.

Table 1. Workshop stages, principal activities, and recorded outputs

Stage	Key activities	Output / evidence
Preparation	Coordination, materials, assessment instruments, worksheets	Facilitation and evaluation package
Opening and baseline	Registration, contextual orientation, pre-test	Initial workshop-aligned responses
Research methods	Problem formulation; experiments, R&D, CAR; instruments	Discussion and exercises
Article writing	Manuscript architecture, scientific style, references	Writing guidance and examples
Reflection & evaluation	Discussion, post-test, satisfaction and open questions	Workshop feedback & evaluation
Post-workshop planning	Mentoring log, product tracker, review checkpoints	Tools for a proposed writing clinic

Table 1 shows that the central deliverables of the one-day intervention were the facilitated learning sequence, contextual cases, writing guidance, and immediate evaluation records. By contrast, the mentoring tracker and review checkpoints were only prepared for future implementation. This separation matters because the availability of a follow-up tool does not demonstrate that coaching has been delivered or that a teacher has completed a publication.

The workshop-aligned assessment consisted of 20 multiple-choice items in each test, distributed across research foundations and processes (4), research-design selection (3), data/instruments/interpretation (5), manuscript architecture (5), and citation/reference practices (3). Each correct response was assigned one point (possible total 0–20). The pre-test and post-test covered comparable content domains but used differently worded questions; their equivalence in item difficulty was not statistically established. A 15-item five-point satisfaction form (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and three open questions addressed relevance, facilitation, writing support, and follow-up needs. The project records provided 14 coded evaluation sets, 13 complete pre/post pairs, and 10 sufficiently complete satisfaction forms; missing values were not imputed. Total paired scores and satisfaction responses were summarized descriptively, while open-ended comments informed operational priorities. The instruments were designed for local workshop evaluation, but the available documentation contains neither a formal expert-panel content-validation report nor demonstrated test reliability coefficients (e.g., KR-20) or a validated construct scale. With this small set of responses, post hoc internal-consistency estimates would also be unstable. The results are therefore treated as short-term workshop-aligned response indicators, not standardized measures of independently demonstrated professional competence or causal intervention effects.

Institutional coordination was supported by a formal university assignment letter, and the partner school facilitated the workshop; the school principal formally opened the event. Teachers were informed during the activity that the program and its evaluation would be used for community-engagement reporting and outputs. Analytical records used participant codes, results are reported in aggregate, and missing responses were not reconstructed. The available project documentation does not establish separately signed research-consent forms or an ethics-committee clearance number; neither is claimed here. Publication of identifiable workshop photographs is contingent on the applicable institutional and participant permissions. These precautions distinguish the authorized implementation of the activity from any additional research-specific or image-publication permissions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Workshop delivery and partner participation

The integrated workshop was implemented at SMK Karsa Mulya on the planned date, with university facilitators and the school collaborating in a computer-laboratory setting. Teachers participated in contextual

explanations and discussion linking technical teaching problems to research questions, evidence sources, and manuscript sections. Presenting CAR, experiments, and R&D as different responses to different questions was intended to prevent selecting a methodology merely because it is familiar. This sequence directly addressed the first two service objectives, although classroom use of the introduced ideas was not observed after the event.

Figure 1 presents documentary evidence of the workshop setting, including the use of computers, teacher participation, and facilitator interaction. The photographs support the report that the activity took place; they do not independently establish competence gains. The use of authentic examples is consistent with studies of vocational teacher needs and training programs that seek to connect teacher professional development with work-based and classroom-specific contexts (Murwaningsih & Fauziah, 2022; Setiawan et al., 2025).

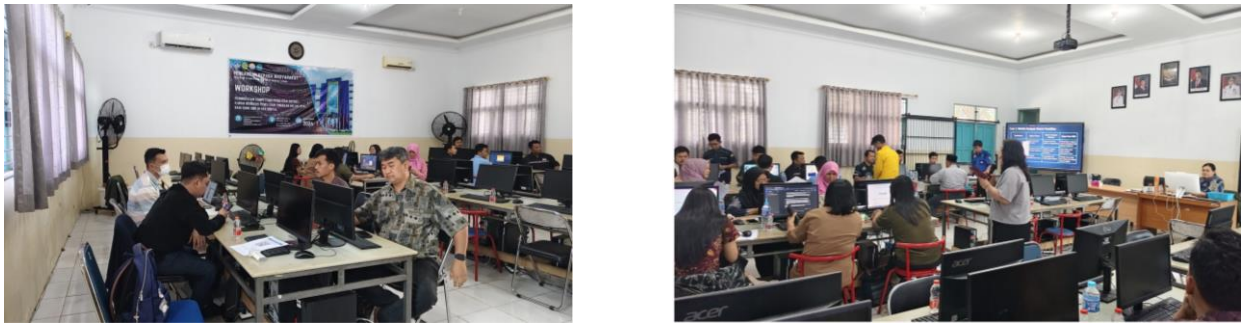


Figure 1. Workshop Implementation In the Computer Laboratory of SMK Karsa Mulya

Figure 1 documents the venue, available computers, teacher participation, and facilitator interaction. The images provide evidence that an organized, jointly hosted workshop occurred and illustrate how explanations were delivered. They cannot establish improvement in research competence, and the participant-level outcomes must instead be interpreted from the limited evaluation forms and any later work products.

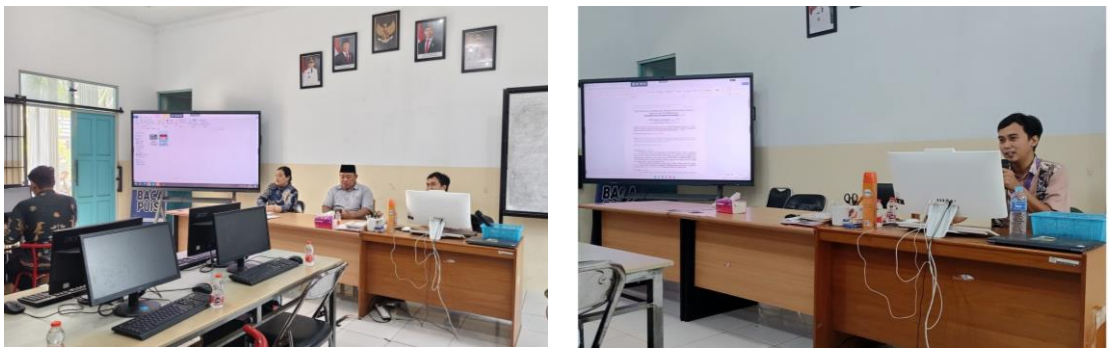


Figure 2. Facilitated Research-Methodology and Scientific-Writing Sessions

Figure 2 illustrates facilitator-led discussion and the communication of research-design and manuscript-writing material. Its relevance is procedural: participants encountered examples and had opportunities to ask questions in the same venue. Whether those explanations can be transferred into independently revised manuscripts remains an open outcome for the proposed follow-up phase.

Immediate Program Outputs

The immediate documented program outputs comprised three prepared learning strands, a pre/post evaluation package, a satisfaction questionnaire, facilitation resources, photographs, video documentation, and an analysis workbook. The team also prepared rubrics, tracking sheets and a mentoring log to support product-oriented assistance. The distinctions in Table 2 are deliberate: evidence of delivered sessions is not the same as a completed participant manuscript, and a video record is not an independent measure of learning or publication quality. At the documented reporting stage, there was no verified count of teacher papers submitted or accepted as a consequence of the workshop.

Table 2. Verified program outputs and their current significance for the partner

Component	Verified / Documented Status	Implication
Workshop & materials	22 September 2026; three learning strands used	Accessible, structured learning opportunity
Evaluation tools	Tests, satisfaction form, analytical workbook	Basis for identifying follow-up priorities
Activity documentation	Photographs and video produced	Documentation and dissemination material
Mentoring resources	Review rubrics, logs, and trackers prepared	Infrastructure for subsequent product support
Teachers' publications	No verified completed	Outcome requires later follow-up evidence

Table 2 clarifies the program's current level of attainment. Workshop materials, responses, and documentation were available, while coaching infrastructure was ready for subsequent use. The publication-related column remains unverified, so no number of completed teacher submissions is claimed. The table therefore provides a transparent baseline against which a later community-engagement phase could examine successive draft versions and confirmed submission receipts.

Descriptive evaluation and expressed needs

The short-term evaluation offers a qualified descriptive signal. Across 13 complete paired responses, the mean test score increased from 14.15 to 15.62 on a 0–20 scale (+1.46 points); one further response set could not be paired. Nine paired respondents improved, three declined, and one remained unchanged. This variation is more informative for service planning than a group mean alone: a common workshop may not meet all initial needs equally, and a short exposure cannot establish durable learning. Because the pre/post forms used different item wording without documented difficulty equating, some observed variation may also reflect measurement differences. Accordingly, these scores should not be interpreted as causal proof of increased research competence. Gesel et al. (2021) observed substantial heterogeneity across professional-development effects on teachers' data-based decisions; although that evidence concerns a different training domain, it reinforces the value of cautious interpretation of aggregate indicators.

Among the 10 analyzable satisfaction forms, mean satisfaction was 3.99/5 and 80.7% of responses to the 15 rated items indicated agreement or strong agreement. Open responses described the workshop as relevant but requested longer exercises, repeated feedback on manuscripts, guidance on citations, and assistance through submission. Positive satisfaction and unresolved performance needs are therefore compatible: respondents may value an introductory workshop without yet being able to independently produce a journal-ready article. The difference between favorable reception and demonstrated writing products should guide evaluation of any later mentoring activities.

At the level of workshop content, the earlier evaluation also suggested relatively encouraging short-term responses on design selection and manuscript architecture, alongside unresolved difficulties in data/instrument interpretation and reference practice. Such differences are diagnostic priorities rather than evidence of genuine domain-specific skill loss, since the test forms were not equated. This implementation report does not reproduce detailed item-level response transitions, which are reserved for separate empirical analysis. For the partner, the operational lesson is to direct the next phase toward instrument critique, reference reconciliation, and review of actual written drafts rather than simply repeating overview lectures.

Operational Constraints and Lessons for Program Design

The central operational constraint was a single-day agenda covering research foundations, design selection, evidence and instruments, manuscript structure, and reference management. Providing examples across these areas is feasible in one session, but independently producing credible instruments, interpreting data, and revising texts requires cycles of practice and feedback. The program also encountered heterogeneous prior knowledge and incomplete response forms (13 paired tests; 10 satisfaction forms). Consequently, the results should not be generalized to all teachers at the partner school. Sims et al. (2025) distinguish introductory insight and technique development from embedding new habits in practice; our available evidence concerns primarily the former. At the same time, Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) argue that duration or collaboration alone does not establish effectiveness. The relevant recommendation is thus to define concrete products and feedback mechanisms, not merely to increase the number of meetings.

Specific community-service evidence helps translate this interpretation into a practicable design. Adi et al. (2021), Estriyanto et al. (2023), and Chairani (2025) link teacher-writing programs to continuing mentoring or manuscript completion; Relawati et al. (2024) isolate reference management as a technical bottleneck; and Rianto et al. (2024) provide support for learning the Open Journal System. Bergmark (2023) finds that research-oriented teacher learning benefits from context-specific questions and teacher ownership, while Makhmetova et al. (2025) review professional-learning experiences that combine formal and informal opportunities. These studies differ in populations and designs and cannot verify the effectiveness of the unimplemented clinics at SMK Karsa Mulya, but they provide plausible mechanisms for a partner-responsive next phase. More recent initiatives report mentoring through final manuscript production in other Indonesian contexts (Jaguna et al., 2026), while AI-assisted scientific-writing sessions represent a different type of technical support that was not tested in this workshop (Nurmasitah et al., 2025).

A defensible follow-up must associate each mentoring activity with traceable evidence. A research problem can be reviewed for clarity and alignment with CAR, experimental or R&D aims; an instrument can be checked against intended indicators; a manuscript can be reviewed for correspondence among research questions, methods, evidence, interpretation and citations; and claimed journal submission should be verified by a receipt. This product-based sequence makes it possible to distinguish exposure, attempted application, revised work, and confirmed publication steps. It also prevents the favorable immediate satisfaction score from becoming a proxy for a publication outcome.

Proposed product-oriented writing clinics

The prepared review rubric, mentoring log, and product tracker provide an operational starting point for proposed clinics after the workshop. The proposed stages prioritize: research question and design selection; instrument/data decisions; manuscript architecture; citation and reference checking; and peer review plus journal submission. Each later stage should examine a dated artifact and record whether feedback was adopted; the evidence standards are summarized in Table 3. No claim is made that these clinics were completed, that manuscripts were produced, or that their effectiveness was evaluated during the present reporting period.

Table 3. Proposed Follow-Up Clinics and Minimum Evidence Required

Clinic focus	Target participant artifact	Evidence for future review
Problem & research design	Problem statement, objective, rationale for CAR	Dated design draft and tutor comments
Data and instruments	Indicator matrix, instrument, analysis outline	Instrument version with feedback
Manuscript structure	Draft sections tied to available classroom evidence	Successive draft versions and revision log
References and citations	Traceable, consistent sources and citations	Citation-reference correspondence check
Peer review & submission	Manuscript formatted for a selected journal	Review checklist and submission proof

Table 3 sets out a feasible monitoring framework rather than completed results. It links each clinic topic to an identifiable artifact and minimum evidence, thereby making later claims about progress auditable. If the school and university implement the clinics, records should include attendance, successive versions, reviewer feedback and submission confirmations; only then could longer-term professional development and publication outcomes be assessed.

IV. CONCLUSION

The 22 September 2026 workshop connected vocational teaching problems, fit-for-purpose research-design choices, and the organization of scientific articles through an integrated community engagement activity. The documented outcomes were an implemented workshop, teaching and evaluation materials, partner participation, and a prepared monitoring package. The limited paired responses showed a descriptive upward mean but heterogeneous individual change, while satisfaction feedback indicated both perceived usefulness and a need for further hands-on assistance. Neither sustained research competence nor completed teacher publications were verified, and the evaluation instruments were not independently validated. The practical contribution is a transparent bridge from the initial research-and-writing workshop to an evidence-based plan for product-oriented clinics. Future follow-up should evaluate actual draft revisions, instructor feedback, citation accuracy, and verified submissions before making claims of durable outcomes.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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VI. REFFERENCE

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