

## Exploring Academic Writing Needs of Indonesian EFL Undergraduate Students

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### Abstract

Academic writing is noteworthy competence to be accomplished for English as a foreign language (EFL) students to fulfill their academic needs at the university. To do so, Indonesian tertiary universities accommodate and foster this competence using academic writing course. The study, therefore, sought to look into: 1. what undergraduate EFL students' perceptions of the importance of academic writing to their current study and future career, 2. what the students' perceptions of the difficulties of academic writing, 3. what the students' attitudes towards their previous and future academic writing courses. The present study investigates students' needs emerging in academic writing during classroom practices to gain insightful and profound perspectives for forthcoming needs of the course. Data were collected through a five scaled questionnaire of need analysis distributed to thirty-four EFL students from a private university, and a focus group interview involving nine participants. Results indicate 61% ( $M_{difficulties}=3.05$ ) of students faced difficulties in both general skills and language problems of academic writing and a new course was expected to provide moves/steps for writing the sections in a research article. The present study then suggests that e-database resources are needed for academic papers models and references hence its efficiency and flexibility in prospective academic writing.

*Keywords:* academic writing, EFL students, need analysis

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## Introduction

### *The Necessity of Academic Writing*

Academic writing contributes crucial roles for students' academic purposes; papers, assignments, exercises and thesis for meeting their academic needs (Aunurrahman, Hamied, & Emilia, 2017; Ariyanti, 2016; Soehadi, 2008; Husin & Nurbayani, 2017; Sriwichai & Inpin, 2018; Yasuda 2014; Gillett, Hammond, & Martala, 2009). The experts agree that academic writing as a skill required for academic context has a significant impact on the scope of students' written academic papers in a university context to meet their degree. Van de Poel & Gasiorek (2012) note some projects which staked one's skill of writing in academic discourse essays, projects, lecture notes, theses, and a research paper. Thus, students must have some skills of writing such as organizing words in a sentence, developing ideas in a paragraph, using proper grammar and punctuation to compose their writing. Giridharan (2012) assumes that by mastering academic writing, students will see their academic success since the quality of an individual's written work determines his/her scholarship and acceptance in university. Similar viewpoint from Bailey (2003) which also elaborates that academic writing is designed to students at English medium colleges and universities for guiding and preparing them to compose academic essays and other written exam assignments with fulfilling conventions in style, referencing and organization of their essay. In an academic setting, written academic works deserve getting priority from practitioners because several students' projects such as research report, essay, examination questions, dissertation thesis to their practical application are commonly requested upon courses (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2015). Thus, academic writing influences beneficial roles to the students' needs so that it should be developed in formal instructional settings at tertiary education.

### *The Difficulties of Academic Writing*

Despite its urgency in an academic context, students might come across difficulties in academic writing. Research has demonstrated the challenges encountered by students in higher education. In the process of writing, they have to generate, outline new ideas and compose them in a proper academic essay with their capability for achieving new situations of educational setting. Van de Poel & Gasiorek (2012) further assert that learning to write primarily in academic context is considered the problematic skill to compete for students both English as a second or foreign language. Ariyanti (2016) argues that the contextual translation competence became troublesome for EFL students in Indonesia when writing an academic essay. Consequently, most of the students' academic essays do not make sense with addressee language and their writing are unreadable especially for native speakers. Yasuda (2014) contents that writing instruction in Japan has merely focused on decontextualized contents while encouraging students to be a good writer who should transform their meaning into a contextualized essay has been ignored. He further suggests that future directions for EFL writing instruction should help students develop their real-world communication skills. Issues in teaching and learning writing are comparable across East Asian EFL contexts, and writing practitioners in East Asian countries need to cross the border to develop theories and pedagogies that accommodate the unique needs of EFL writers in East Asian contexts. Then, Bian & Wang (2016) argue that undergraduate students experienced process-oriented difficulties throughout the process of academic writing such as generating ideas, outlining, paraphrasing, and summarizing. They also encountered product-related problems such as inappropriate style of writing, referencing, and citation. Gillett, Hammond, & Martala (2009)

claim that complex, formal, objective, hedged, a precise and accurate language which is also considered difficult to be taught to students in academic writing.

### ***Need Analysis of Academic Writing***

Needs analysis (NA) is a preliminary step in developing or reforming the existing course. It provides information about what learners already know and what they need to know. Nation & Macalister (2010) and Long (2005) divide need analysis into necessities (what students need to learn), lack (what students' problems throughout learning) and wants (what students wish to learn). Several studies (Cai and Kong, 2013; Fadda, 2012; Evans & Green, 2007; Al-Saadi & Samuel, 2013) explored the need analysis of academic writing from different contexts. These studies indicated that students faced difficulties on the process of composing their essays starting generating ideas, outlining process, and producing the written work. The language problems such as failing to distinguish spoken and written English, use academic vocabularies, grammar, and style, therefore, impeded to their essay in academic context. Apart from students' internal problem, these findings pointed out that the style of classroom instructions unguided students to write effectively and academically.

Although several studies have sought to analyze students' needs of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), none of them has looked specifically into the academic writing of EFL undergraduate students. Evans & Green (2007) and Al-Saadi & Samuel (2013) conducted a large-scale survey on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for undergraduate students. Both studies analyzed general skills concerning productive skills and acquisition, and the specific problems from a course offered as the most important point were not identified in detail. However, Cai & Kong (2013) conducted a need analysis research on postgraduate students which discussed in detail the students' language problems especially in writing skill and the quality of academic writing course offered, and specific betterment action from the course was elaborated in general. The present study, therefore, attempted to provide an in-depth exploration of EFL students' perceptions towards learning academic writing, their current difficulties in academic writing skills, their biggest concerns and wishes in learning academic writing, and their previous and prospective new academic writing courses.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

The present research involved thirty-four EFL students who took the academic writing course in the fifth semester at a private university in Ciamis, West Java, Indonesia. They were from a heterogenous background including proficiency, gender, and education. They consisted of 24 female and five male students who previously graduated from private and state senior high schools. Moreover, to facilitate students' need of improving their language proficiency to the expected level, the students ought to attend language practicums. These programs are designed to provide students' extra need of language practice which they have not met yet in regular classroom meeting and achieve department's goal setting for average TOEFL score (above 475 for passing grade). Technically, at the end of the semester for every program, the examinations are conducted to let students know their current proficiency. The tests cover listening, speaking, reading, writing, and language with concerning both of macro and micro skills. Also, passing some courses such as

general English writing, writing for functional text, business writing, and creative writing is the prerequisite for taking the academic writing course.

### ***Need Analysis Questionnaire***

To obtain quantitative data about students' needs of academic writing, an online questionnaire using Google Form tool was administered to the participants. It used a five-point scale, from the lowest (least important/very difficult/least preferable) to the highest (most important/very easy/ most preferable). The questionnaire asked about their personal information (i.e., name, gender, and age) and three parts of sequenced questions. The first part deals with the students' perceptions of the importance of academic writing (necessities). Besides the information above the questionnaire also elicited data about their interest in learning academic writing and main text types which should be learned in the entire course. In addition, the second part enquires the lack of the course or students' difficulties faced in learning it throughout one semester. Some questions elicit on the provided classroom activities, applied techniques in writing for academic purposes, and designed materials. The third part asks students' wants or wishes in learning toward future academic writing. It tapped into students' choices on the learning activities such as classroom activities (teacher-centered learning, student oral presentation, drills, and soon) and designed materials (textbook, supplementary handbook, e-resources, and digital library). After data were collected, the internal consistency of the reliability of the questionnaire calculated using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha indicated that part 1 (difficulties) had a high level of reliability at  $\alpha = .846$ , part 2 (students' preference) pointed out level of reliability at  $\alpha = .703$ , part 3 (teaching activities frequencies) showed level of reliability at  $\alpha = .826$ . Likewise, the reliability level for the three parts combined is high, at  $\alpha = .792$ . Based on these results, it may be assumed that the questionnaire was reliable to be used.

### ***Focus Group Interview***

A focus group interview was conducted to attain in-depth information about students' perceptions of academic writing and support the previous responses from the questionnaire. The interview involved nine students who have chosen purposively. Besides, two other senior students were chosen to be moderator and documentary assistant, who was firstly trained and briefed, to lead the interview process in a comfortable and relaxed situation. The interview was also conducted in Indonesian or even Sundanese language and all the interviews were then transcribed to English. The interview lasted about three hours which asked several questions as supported as at NA questionnaire with some follow-up questions for obtaining deeper information. To gain an intended result, the collected data was analyzed thematically which was concerned with highlighting, examining, and classifying the data recorded to proper and decided themes.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***Research Question 1: The Importance of Academic Writing for Current Needs and Future Career (students' needs)***

The first research question aimed to examine how the students perceive the importance of academic writing for current needs and their future career. An analysis of the questionnaire and focus-group interview provided the data to answer this question. The descriptive statistics data from the students' questionnaire responses were presented first. Next, the qualitative data from the interview were presented to support students' information from the questionnaire. Turning first to

questionnaire findings, the mean scores for these two items are high ( $M=4.24$   $SD=.85$ ) and ( $M=4.47$   $SD=.61$ ) respectively, indicating that they strongly agree with the statements on the perceptions of the importance of academic writing both to the current study and future career. However, their high awareness of its importance is not in line with their interest or inner pleasure of academic writing, which is slightly lower than their needs ( $M=3.29$   $SD=1.12$ ). Data from group interview supported their perceptions of the academic writing importance for a future career, especially related to the Indonesian government demand for research publication as part of the teacher or lecturer certification and professional development. In addition to educating, teachers are required to do research about their classes and publish academic articles via seminars, workshops, and journals. Even though the government policy on the language used in research article for English teachers in primary to senior high-level education is Indonesian, the skills of academic writing can be implemented well in their papers. On the other hand, students assumed that the teachers did not give much interest in academic writing because it was difficult and needed extra effort, especially dealing with diction, grammar, and technical problems. Also, it was such an unusual activity to be implemented in their daily life.

Generally, the findings agree with the results from previous studies of EFL students (Evans & Green, 2007; Cai & Kong 2013) that academic writing is an important skill for their study, graduation requirements, and future career yet they lacked interest. Moreover, Cai & Kong (2013, p. 9) study highlighted that students' interest in academic writing was slightly low. Hence most students actually dislike using academic language, as it is "too formal and structured, and has little space for free writing. This is supported by the interview results that academic essay really needs hard work to express the writer's opinion and ideas in a written form by using appropriate academic vocabulary and styles. They argued that writing an academic essay spent much time and effort throughout the writing process and generally found it difficult to communicate their ideas appropriately.

Regarding the students' priority in learning text types and materials of an academic writing course, most of the participants chose research papers/report as their main choice (75.6%), followed by paraphrasing articles (63.3 %). All the choices above 50 % indicated that text types and materials of academic writing are important to their academic needs, except stating the facts, statistics, and citation as the lowest option since the previous course provided the similar material, but the review of material is needed. This finding provides similar results from Evans & Green's (2007) study which emphasized that writing research papers/report is one of the most important tasks in academic writing for non-native English undergraduates, but the current course did not provide a literature review and writing for the body section during a semester.

### ***Research Question 2: Students' Perceptions of the Difficulties of Academic Writing for Students (Students' Lack)***

The second research question sought to look into students' perceptions of the difficulties of academic writing. From the findings, most of the items were rated above 3, meaning that provided academic writing activities are difficult for students. Otherwise, the three items were assumed to be easy activities to do during a course. As presented in Table 1, the most difficult academic activity is students' experience in using proper grammar, like correct tenses, agreements,

reporting verbs and preposition in item 10 ( $M=3.48$   $SD=.99$ ) and the most comfortable item related to writing references/bibliography in academic writing ( $M=2.67$   $SD=.87$ ) in item 6.

Turning to the discussion of the items in detail, item 1 asked students' activities about their academic planning essays (brainstorming, free writing, clustering, and listing), and students rated some natural skills to be implemented in academic writing ( $M=2.91$   $SD=0.93$ ). They argued that planning to start writing was a natural skill due to the richness of resources. Dessy (pseudonym) made one comment for this point:

*My favorite activity in writing class is generating ideas, I can apply some techniques such as brainstorming, free writing, listing, and mind mapping. After I got the assignment/project from my lecturers, I directly browse some articles related to my project in Google. (Dessy, focus group interview, April 2018)*

Emili (pseudonym), in particular, added the comment on where she commonly searched some articles to get some ideas:

*Emili: If I did not find a suitable topic in Google, I also tried to find at academia.edu, scribd.com, English journals, other universities digital libraries, and academic websites.*

*Interviewer: How did you get started to download or search your intended topic?*

*Emili: I registered first and logged in to the account, as far as I experienced, these websites are free for limited downloads for each day.*

*Interviewer: Have you ever stuck in generating ideas? What did you do?*

*Emili: Exactly...sometimes I was difficult in getting ideas because there were no articles matched with my project. I went to the campus library and discussed to my classmates about the project. (Emili, focus group interview, April 2018)*

Item 2 enquired students' difficulties in writing a paragraph in a suitable order. Students assumed that structuring some sentences into a proper order was perceived as an easy activity during the course which was indicated from the rating value ( $M=2.88$   $SD=.81$ ). Otherwise, item 3 asked about cohesiveness and coherence in writing a paragraph. The finding indicated that students experienced difficult activities ( $M=3.18$   $SD=.76$ ). Another item which queried on activity about statistical style on presenting data also implied difficult activity to be implemented in classroom practices ( $M=3.15$   $SD=.74$ ). Likewise, in item 7 ways of expressing ideas in English was considered a difficult skill ( $M=3.15$   $SD=.92$ ), indicating that they got problems in communicating their ideas well (item 8,  $M=3.15$   $SD=.93$ ) since they had academic problems on vocabularies, languages, grammar, and style (item 9,  $M=3.03$   $SD=.97$ ). They were stuck in transforming their ideas into a written one. These findings agree with what Hinkel (2003) revealed that students faced lexical and stylistic aspects of academic writing in research from other EAP settings where non-native English speakers were required to write.

In general, the present study gave support to the findings of the previous studies (Evans & Green, 2007; Cai & Kong, 2013; Hinkel, 2003; Al-Saadi & Samuel, 2013; & Fadda, 2012) highlighting students' language-related problems.

**Table 1. Students' difficulties in academic writing (easy-difficult)**

Item		N	M	SD
1	The technique of generating ideas (brainstorming, free writing, clustering, and listing).	34	2.91	0.93
2	Writing the paragraph into suitable order (topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence).	34	2.88	0.81
3	Writing your paragraph coherently and cohesively.	34	3.18	0.76
4	Summarizing/ Paraphrasing.	34	2.91	0.9
5	Presenting data on statistical style.	34	3.15	0.74
6	References/Bibliography.	34	2.67	0.87
7	Expressing ideas in correct English.	34	3.15	0.86
8	Linking your sentences smoothly.	34	3.15	0.93
9	Using proper academic languages, styles and vocabulary.	34	3.03	0.97
10	Proper grammar such as correct tenses, agreements, reporting verbs and preposition.	34	3.48	0.99

***Present Course Reflection***

The present study demonstrated lack of academic writing in classroom practices. The output of an academic writing course should be an academic paper and provides students with preparation for writing a research paper. Unfortunately it was not the case. It ignored the technical skills on content and structure of academic research paper such as writing introduction, searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources, referring to sources, reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap), designing the research methods, writing the methods section, summarizing and presenting the data, commentaries and discussions on the data, proofreading written assignments. Unlike in Hongkong, Mainland China, and Saudi Arabia, the academic writing course in this study had a different policy related to curriculum. After deepening the understanding of gamut globally academic writing, the current study will deal with some further actions. First, merging the courses will be a further action to be taken in the forthcoming curriculum. The previous curriculum of the subject's university has a research proposal writing course which aims at preparing students' research proposal. Otherwise, the current academic writing did not provide skills as global needed. For the prospective course, academic writing should be straightforward on the global needs of preparing students in composing research article/paper and teaching the academic writing skills and its language needs. In parallel with the previous action, the head of study program will add time allotment of the course to accommodate class needs.

***Research Question 3: Students' Perceptions on Previous and Future Academic Writing Courses***

The third research question focused on students' experience of the implementation from the previous academic writing course and their expectation of prospective academic writing. The comparison between the frequency ratings of both previous and future academic writing is presented in Table 2 and Table 3. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: academic writing materials preferences, frequencies of teaching activities, and the students' wants of a new academic writing course. The research results pointed out that throughout classroom practices, the lecturer tended to prefer key text books in academic writing for teaching and learning process (M=3.91 SD=.1) to other resources or supplementary handouts. To support it, focus group interviews also

revealed that their lecturer often used their textbook during classroom meeting including materials, exercises, and tasks after class-meeting. In a contrast perspective, students experienced boredom to learn different materials delivered in the same and monotonous way.

**Table 2. Teaching materials of academic writing (least preferable-most preferable)**

Item	N	M	SD
1 The key textbook used in class	34	3.91	0.1
2 Other supplementary handouts	34	2.74	1.02
3 Other supplementary authentic research papers as models	34	2.88	0.89
4 Supplementary exercises	34	2.91	0.1

Regarding the teaching activities frequencies, as presented in Table 3, teacher-centered lectures were still a dominant method in the current academic writing course ( $M=3,91$   $SD=1.16$ ), it was followed by students' oral presentation and group discussion on tasks ( $M=3,56$  and  $M=3,50$  respectively). Further, most interviewees stated that one of the favourite activities during classroom processes was students' oral presentation in which they were challenged to prepare materials for presenting it in front of their classmates. The question and answer session during the presentation made them apprehensive since the students in charge of presentation had to respond to their mates' questions. In addition to the activity's prevalence in academic writing, academic writing drills and its references were most frequently taught ( $M=3.85$  and  $M=3.52$  respectively). Otherwise, several activities had a lack of academic language activities such as grammar, vocabulary, and proof-reading assignments ( $M=2.62$ ,  $M=2.76$  and  $M=2.01$  respectively).

**Table 3. Teaching activities of academic writing (least frequent-most frequent)**

Item	N	M	SD
1 Teacher-centred lectures	34	3.91	1.16
2 Student oral presentation	34	3.56	1.11
3 Group discussions on task	34	3.50	0.96
4 Academic Grammar drills	34	2.62	0.95
5 Academic vocabulary drills	34	2.76	1.02
6 Academic writing drills	34	3.85	0.99
7 Academic writing references drills	34	3.52	0.98
8 Proof-reading written assignments	34	2.01	0.73

After the discussion of students' experience of academic writing, this part concerned the students' expectation toward forthcoming new look of academic writing. As presented in Table 4, regarding teaching materials, the students argued that the use of textbooks was primarily crucial to their learning process because they need to get academic materials from the textbooks. From the finding, it figures out that 60% of research participants expected the use of textbooks to be continued in the future course. In addition, research papers as the supplementary handout were preferred by the participants as they needed a model (53 % out of 100%). The interview data also revealed that by analysing and reading more research papers, students obtained more models as their background knowledge before initiating their paper writing. However, the supplementary exercises did not need to be attached throughout writing class since they have found the textbook. Most of the

participants mentioned that their textbook was full of exercises to be completed in every meeting and their lecturer often gave them tasks related to meeting materials. For them, writing tasks were time consuming and they might not deal with additional tasks or assignment.

An additional comment also came from Sasa (pseudonym), one of the participants:  
*The supplementary tasks from other books were not needed anymore because I really need model research papers as my references in writing my academic papers or essay (Sasa, Focus group comment, April 2018).*

Related to the students' expectation of teaching activities in academic writing course, students preferred several activities which will be offered such as student oral presentation, group discussions on task, and drillings to teacher-centred learning. (27 % out of 100% from research participants). Based on the interview comment, teacher-centred learning didn't allow students to participate actively so that they got bored and demotivated during teaching and learning process. Turning to the language needs for the new academic writing course, all the aspects were needed for their forthcoming course because the result of the current findings from students' difficulties and their expectation of academic writing was informative. Evans & Green, (2007) and Cai & Kong (2013) also elaborated that undergraduate and masters students faced difficulties. As highlighted in Evans & Green's (2007, p. 11) study, students found more difficulties related to the language rather than the content or structure of academic texts.

In relation to writing organization and content, academic writing in the previous course did not prepare students for writing a research paper because the subsequent course focused on a research paper. Dealing with the global need of academic writing, the prospective course should equip students with skills to organize the main body which is well-structured in academic papers including some text types: the experiment set up, method, findings/result, case study, and discussion (Bailey, 2003). Moreover, academic writing closely related to scientific articles should introduce students in writing as IMRAD structure: introduction, method, result, and discussion (Hartley, 2008).

Additionally, peer proof-reading assignment had been applied in the previous academic writing course although it was rarely used. The evidence suggests that 69% of the participants needed proof-reading due to the inaccuracy of last proof-reading assignments. As the interview data suggested, the interviewer asked students to proofread their classmates' essays in terms of punctuation, grammar, and spelling. One of the students confirmed that the proof-reading activity was already done, but the essay still could not be read well. According to Bailey (2003, p.48), some common error types were word ending, punctuation, tense, vocabulary, spelling, singular/plural, style, missing words and unnecessary words. The new course of academic writing would be provided with this systematic activity on the call for action.

Finally, searching the information throughout the academic writing course was highly needed by students for gaining optimum information. As the questionnaire data indicated, students responded 81 % and 75 % respectively for finding academic resources and using e-database activities for the forthcoming course. To support this finding, they also wished that the new course would provide them not only with paper-based resources, but also e-resources such as e-books,

links, video, exercises and assignment because of their efficiency and flexibility (Focus group comments).

**Table 4. Students' wants to learn in new academic writing course**

Category		Percentage (%)
Teaching materials	The key textbook used in class	60
	Other supplementary handouts	34
	Other supplementary authentic research papers as models	53
	Supplementary exercises	27
Teaching activities	Teacher-centered lectures	27
	Student oral presentation	65
	Group discussions on task	67
	Academic grammar drills	70
	Academic vocabulary drills	85
	Academic writing drills	92
	Academic writing references drills	90
Language	Academic language	64
	Coherence and cohesion	67
	Academic style	75
Writing and Organization	Writing introduction	72
	Writing literature review	76
	Writing research methodology	70
	Commenting and summarizing findings	78
	Referring to sources	70
	Writing conclusion	73
	Proof-reading written assignments	69
Searching for Information	Finding academic resources	81
	Using E-database and exercise	75

### **Call for Actions**

This part focuses on what elements, aspects, and skills must be offered to students which they neither encounter nor apply them optimally in the previous course. First, the proof-reading assignment is considered a crucial activity that should be provided to the students. According to Bailey (2003, p. 48), this activity is important and the final part of the writing process. As the previous data suggested, this activity was rarely conducted in an academic writing class as figured out in Table 3 ( $M=2.01$   $SD = .73$ ). For the new academic writing course, proof-reading assignments should be regular and systemic after classroom meeting. This part will be conducted every two weeks consisting of two rounds: the first round is lecturer's proof reading on content and organization and the second round is peer editing focusing on the mechanics, grammar, and vocabularies. Also, these activities will be monitored well by the lecturer.

Second, writing organization and content are the most crucial skills to be taught to students. On the other hand, the previous course did not teach these skills to the students. Students learned argumentative essay, opinion essay, descriptive essay, statistical (stating the facts, statistics, and graph) essay, and references/bibliography but lecturers did not teach research paper sections such as introduction, method, discussion. After doing this evaluative process, some needed skills and aspects of the prospective new course were incorporated into the new curriculum. The new course of academic writing will accommodate students' needs of time allotment and research paper output. As the interviewees contended, adding the time allotment might be the solution for the students' problems. In addition, the new course of academic writing will prepare students for writing a research paper so the overlapping course contents will be eliminated and another course which is integrated to the academic writing such methodological design course will be put in the previous semester or in the sequence of the academic writing course.

Finally, using e-database and exercise will be new for an academic writing course for its efficiency and flexibility. So, students can start their migration from paper-based sources to e-database and practices. Some interviewees claimed that such migration would please them because they did not need to copy textbooks, research journals, and print out their assignments. Besides, regarding efficiency, the interviewees underlined the flexible use of it in completing their assignments and reading materials.

## Conclusion

The results of the present study implied that certain needs of academic writing include necessities, lack and wants. From the questionnaire and focus group interview data, EFL students' needs especially in a private university in learning academic writing have been elaborated. In addition to identifying target needs, necessities and difficulties, this present study specifically sought to examine students' perceptions and attitudes (wants) towards their previous academic writing courses and prospective new courses. The students found difficulties in academic writing because they were not taught the necessary skills in their previous academic writing course. The use of proper grammar such as correct tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and preposition are perceived as the most difficult throughout the academic writing course. The other difficult activities of writing were expressing ideas correctly and choosing the appropriate academic language. In their previous course, students were not taught how to write each section of a research paper with appropriate moves/steps and infrequently introduced to academic language features and styles. Consequently, in a proposed new course, they would be taught these aspects. In addition, providing e-database and exercises will be the new feature of prospective new course due to the students' needs of paperless and its flexibility. This present study should be conducted in a wider area of education in Indonesia, so other investigations are recommended to elicit note worthing related to the area of academic writing.

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