

When Teachers and Students Become Journalists: A Reflective Experience in Building a School Journalism Community

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Penyebaran hoaks di era digital telah menjadi ancaman serius bagi kualitas informasi sekaligus kesehatan mental siswa di Indonesia, sehingga menjadi salah satu pemicu kecemasan dan kepanikan. Oleh karena itu, perlu dilaksanakan kegiatan pengabdian dengan tujuan membekali guru-guru MGMP Bahasa Indonesia di Banda Aceh untuk membentuk komunitas dan platform jurnalisisme muda berbasis literasi dan numerasi. Program pelatihan secara umum mencakup pengenalan isu hoaks, penguatan keterampilan menulis opini, dan pemanfaatan platform digital untuk publikasi. Data kegiatan berupa refleksi peserta mengenai pengalaman selama mengikuti pelatihan. Hasil refleksi menunjukkan bahwa guru merasa lebih percaya diri dalam membimbing siswa berpikir kritis, menyadari pentingnya integrasi numerasi sederhana dalam penulisan, dan terdapat potensi kolaborasi dalam membangun komunitas jurnalisisme sekolah. Dengan demikian, kegiatan ini tidak hanya meningkatkan kesadaran guru terhadap bahaya hoaks, tetapi juga menegaskan peran strategis mereka sebagai agen literasi dan numerasi dalam membangun sekolah yang tangguh terhadap dampak hoaks pada kesehatan mental siswa.

Kata Kunci Hoaks, literasi digital, numeras, jurnalisisme sekolah, refleksi peserta

Abstract

The spread of hoaxes in the digital era has become a serious threat to both the quality of information and students' mental health in Indonesia, triggering anxiety and panic. Therefore, a community service program was carried out with the aim of equipping Indonesian Language MGMP teachers in Banda Aceh to establish a community and youth journalism platform based on literacy and numeracy. The training program generally covered the introduction of hoax-related issues, the strengthening of opinion-writing skills, and the use of digital platforms for publication. The program data consisted of participants' reflections on their experiences during the training. The reflections indicated that teachers felt more confident in guiding students to think critically, realized the importance of integrating simple numeracy into writing, and identified potential for collaboration in building a school journalism community. Thus, this program not only enhanced teachers' awareness of the dangers of hoaxes but also reaffirmed their strategic role as literacy and numeracy agents in fostering resilient schools against the impact of hoaxes on students' mental health.

Keywords Hoaxes, digital literacy, numeracy, school journalism, participant reflection

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought many benefits to education, one of which is the ease of access to information that supports the teaching and learning process. However, on the other hand, the massive flow of information in the digital space also presents serious challenges in the form of the widespread dissemination of hoaxes (Prayoga et al., 2024). A hoax is information that does not originate from facts or data, but rather fabricated content disseminated massively with the aim of misleading the public (Lestari & Saidah, 2023). Data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kominfo, 2022) recorded thousands of hoax contents circulating every year, particularly through social media, which is most frequently accessed by young people. This condition has the potential to influence students' ways of thinking and even negatively affect their mental health. Hoaxes not only reduce the quality of information literacy but can also trigger feelings of anxiety and depression among the public (De Coninck et al., 2021; Arora et al., 2025), panic, and declining trust in journalism (Rega et al., 2022; National Literacy Trust, 2018).

Today's young generation, who are highly familiar with digital technology, are closely connected with gadgets and social media, making them the most vulnerable group to hoax exposure (Prayoga et al., 2024). Indonesia is among the countries with high levels of social media usage, which makes the circulation of information very fast and not always accountable (Handayani et al., 2024; Kominfo, 2022). This situation makes hoaxes an important issue in the field of education. Students, as digital natives, often rely on social media as their main source of information, although not all the content they consume is based on valid facts (Supratman, 2018). This situation requires teachers and schools to take an active role, not only as deliverers of learning materials but also as facilitators of digital literacy who help students filter information more critically and wisely.

Digital literacy, in essence, is not merely a technical skill to access or search for information. It also includes the ability to analyze message content, assess source credibility, and produce positive and useful content for others (Darvin, 2017). With these skills, students are not only consumers of information but also capable of contributing as responsible producers of information. One concrete form of strengthening digital literacy in schools can be realized through journalistic activities. Through journalism practice, students are encouraged to learn

how to identify relevant issues, verify the data obtained, write opinions using proper language, and present fact-based writing supported by simple numeracy. This activity not only develops writing skills but also instills critical, reflective, and ethical attitudes in dealing with the flood of information in the digital era.

School journalism has great potential as both a learning medium and a creative platform for students to express ideas, voice opinions, and practice writing skills. Journalistic activities not only strengthen language proficiency but also foster values of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility in conveying information. In this regard, teachers have a strategic role as facilitators and mentors, ensuring that students not only develop writing skills but also cultivate social awareness and critical attitudes toward emerging issues.

Furthermore, the literacy developed in school journalism aligns with numeracy literacy. Numeracy is not merely understood as the ability to perform arithmetic but as the competence to use data, numbers, and quantitative information to support understanding and decision-making (OECD, 2019). In opinion writing, numeracy plays a crucial role in strengthening arguments with concrete evidence. For example, students may use statistical data, simple survey results, or relevant figures as the basis for analysis in their writing. Thus, school journalism serves as an integrative medium between language literacy and numeracy literacy.

Based on the description above, journalism training based on literacy and numeracy functions not only as a means of enhancing technical skills but also as a reflective learning space for teachers and students in facing the challenges of digital information flow. However, studies specifically examining how teachers and students reflect on their experiences after participating in such training remain very limited. Most previous research and community engagement programs have focused more on program implementation and the journalistic products produced rather than on the reflection process as a source of meaning-making and critical learning. Therefore, this study aims to describe how teachers and students reflect on their experiences during journalism training based on literacy and numeracy.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, as it aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of teachers' and students' reflections after participating in journalism training based on literacy and numeracy. The research involved 30 participants, consisting of five Indonesian language

teachers from the High School MGMP (Subject Teacher Forum) in Banda Aceh and 25 students representing five partner schools, with five students from each school. The participation of teachers was based on their strategic role in integrating literacy and numeracy into learning, while students were selected as representatives of the digital native generation who have the potential to build a school journalism community.

The training was conducted in two face-to-face sessions. In the first session, participants received material on hoax literacy, including the definition, characteristics, impacts, and counter-strategies, followed by an introduction to opinion and feature writing skills. The second session focused on opinion writing practice with intensive mentoring, in which teachers and students collaborated to produce articles addressing issues related to literacy, numeracy, and school life. The learning process was designed based on the principle of experiential learning, enabling participants not only to receive knowledge but also to engage directly in writing practice, discussion, and collaboration.

The research data were obtained from written reflections composed by all participants after the training. The reflections were collected in two formats: written reflection sheets completed at the end of the activity and responses submitted through Google Forms. The content of the reflections included learning experiences, newly acquired understandings, personal impressions, as well as challenges encountered by both teachers and students.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis through several stages: (1) thoroughly reading to understand the context, (2) initial coding of key statements, (3) grouping codes into categories and major themes, and (4) interpreting the themes to address the research questions. The analysis examined both similarities and differences between teachers' and students' reflections to provide a more comprehensive picture of how the two groups interpreted their training experiences.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, source triangulation was applied by comparing teachers' and students' reflections, along with limited member checking with several participants to confirm that the researchers' interpretations aligned with the intended meaning of their reflections. Through this procedure, the study is expected to provide a holistic picture of teachers' and students' reflective experiences as well as the contribution of the training to strengthening literacy, numeracy, and critical attitudes in the school environment.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of school journalism training involving teachers and students provided various experiences captured through participants' reflections. These reflections served as the primary source of qualitative data, illustrating the extent to which the program achieved its objectives: enhancing understanding of hoaxes, strengthening opinion-writing skills, and fostering literacy and numeracy awareness within the school environment. The analysis was conducted by examining teachers' and students' statements to identify key themes representing changes in their knowledge, skills, and attitudes after participating in the training.

Teachers' reflections indicated that the training provided new insights into the issue of hoaxes while simultaneously strengthening their opinion and feature writing skills. They realized that hoaxes are not merely false information but can have a direct impact on students' mental health. Teachers also emphasized the importance of their role as mentors in fostering students' critical attitudes toward the flow of digital information. In addition, the training increased teachers' confidence in teaching writing skills, as they were able to learn from concrete practices and direct guidance provided by the trainers. The main themes derived from teachers' reflections after participating in the journalism training are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Main Themes from Teachers' Reflections

Reflection Theme	Description	Representative Quote
Understanding Hoaxes	Teachers understand the definition and dangers of hoaxes	"A hoax is false information, not fake news, and it spreads very quickly."
Writing Skills	Teachers understand how to write opinion and feature articles	"Opinion writing must be based on data research and developed with sound arguments."
Teachers' Role	Teachers feel more confident in guiding students in writing	"I now better understand how to write engaging opinion and feature articles."

Based on Table 1, teachers' reflections also highlighted the importance of equipping students with the ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, as well as emphasizing ethics in disseminating information. Some teachers even referred to the popular expression, "in the past, your mouth was your tiger, but now your fingers are your tiger," to illustrate how quickly and dangerously hoaxes spread through social media.

In terms of writing skills, teachers felt more prepared to guide students in producing opinion pieces that are not only data-driven but also presented in an engaging style. Feedback from the trainers was regarded as a source of new inspiration, motivating teachers to write and to establish a school journalism community as a platform for sustainable collaboration. Figure 1 below presents an example of teachers' reflections on the importance of distinguishing between opinion, feature writing, and hoaxes.

Dari kegiatan pelatihan "Salah berbasis jurnalisme sebagai upaya Anti-Sipar hoaks yang berdampak pada keselamatan kesehatan sangat dapat di simpulkan bahwa setiap informasi yang di dapat harus terlebih dulu di saring jangan langsung di bagikan pada kalangan umum. Sebagai penerus Indonesia kita harus mampu beradaptasi pada setiap ISI yang beredar, kita juga harus bersikap ideal terhadap setiap informasi yang di terima, serta bersikap cerdas dalam melawan informasi-informasi Hoaks. Oleh karena itu, kita harus dapat membedakan informasi fakta dan opini.

Refleksi

1. Dapat membedakan hoaks
 - ↳ Hoaks adalah informasi bohong bena-benar bohong
 - Banyak hal dalam keseharian informasi hoaks yang tersebar, paling cepat dengan media sosial.
 - Pada dasarnya mulutmu aharimamu tapi setarung sanimu harimamu begitu cepatnya informasi tersebar hanya dengan klik-klik.
2. Menulis Future
 - ↳ Menentukan isu terkini, mengumpulkan informasi, kemudian menulis artikel opini dengan data dan fakta yang menarik.
 - Memilih judul yang menarik agar pembaca penasaran dan ingin membaca lebih lanjut.
 - Dengan narasi dan deskripsi yang senikmat dan menarik serta sehingga menghasilkan tulisan yang bagus.
 - Harus memperhatikan aturan penulisan yang baik.
3. Pengalaman menulis Opini
 - ↳ Jangan takut menulis. Bisa berawal dengan riset data dan ditambahkan dengan opini yang baik.

Figure 1. Example of Teachers' Reflections

Teachers emphasized that they became more capable of distinguishing between facts, opinions, and hoaxes. They realized that in the digital era, information can spread rapidly, thus requiring a critical and prudent attitude in filtering it. Teachers also felt that their skills in writing opinion and feature articles had improved, starting from finding ideas, selecting engaging titles, to constructing narratives based on data and facts. Several teachers stated that the materials and delivery of the facilitators inspired them to write and encouraged them to express their ideas. In addition, teachers underscored the importance of their role as literacy agents, particularly in guiding students to avoid being easily influenced by hoaxes. Their reflections also revealed an awareness of the importance of numeracy literacy, such as the use of

simple data to strengthen arguments in opinion writing.

Meanwhile, students' reflections showed an increased awareness of the dangers of hoaxes as well as motivation to further develop opinion-writing skills. Most students emphasized that they have now become more cautious in receiving and disseminating information from social media. Some admitted that they previously often shared information without verifying its accuracy, but after the training they understood the importance of tabayyun (clarification) before sharing.

In addition, students realized that opinion writing provides a structured space to express their views. They began to understand that an opinion is not merely an expression of feelings, but must be supported by data and facts. This indicates the integration of simple numeracy into their writing practice. The main themes derived from students' reflections after participating in the journalism training are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Main Themes from Students' Reflections

Reflection Theme	Description	Representative Quote
Understanding Hoaxes	Students understand the characteristics and impacts of hoaxes	"Now I know that hoaxes can harm mental health, so I must be careful before sharing news."
Critical Awareness	Students are more cautious in filtering information	"Before sharing information, I will check the source first."
Opinion Writing Skills	Students learn to write opinion pieces using data and facts	"An opinion must include data so that people will believe it."

Based on Table 2, students' reflections also emphasized the importance of paying attention to linguistic aspects when writing opinion pieces, such as the use of standard vocabulary, punctuation, and even the distinction between conjunctions like "however" (namun) and "but" (tetapi). Feedback from the trainers was considered highly valuable, as it guided them to strengthen their arguments with concrete facts. Furthermore, the reflections revealed the emergence of new motivations, including the desire to participate in opinion-writing competitions, increased enthusiasm for reading to broaden their knowledge, and greater confidence in expressing ideas in written form. Figure 2 below presents an example of students' reflections on the importance of distinguishing between facts, opinions, and hoaxes.

Dari workshop hari ini, saya mendapatkan banyak sekali materi materi berharga yang mungkin bahkan pernah saya dapatkan di tempat lain. Pertama, saya mempelajari materi hoaks, pengertian serta cirinya. Saya juga jadi mengetahui bahwa Aceh rupanya berada di peringkat ke-3 dalam hal penyebaran hoaks cukup miris sebenarnya.

Kedua saya juga mempelajari materi opini. Sebelum datang ke workshop dan sebelum menerima paparan materi oleh Pak Yarmen, saya masih bingung bagaimana cara menulis teks opini yang benar. Sebelumnya ada lomba menulis opini yang diadakan oleh salah satu universitas, saya ingin ikut namun ketidaktahuan saya dalam menulis opini membuat saya tidak jadi ikut lomba tersebut. Tapi makasih kepada Pak Yarmen, ke depannya jika ada lomba menulis opini lagi, saya lebih pede untuk ikut.

Figure 2. Example of Students' Reflections

Findings from both teachers and students reveal a common thread that the school journalism training was effective in fostering critical awareness of hoaxes while simultaneously enhancing data-based opinion writing skills. These results align with the perspective of Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), who emphasize that digital literacy must involve critical skills to enable individuals to build resilience against misinformation. The increase in participants' confidence in writing is also consistent with Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which highlights that small experiences of success can strengthen one's belief in their ability to face more complex challenges. Moreover, the emergence of a collaborative spirit in developing a school journalism community reflects Wenger's (1998) concept of a community of practice, where shared practices become a means of sustained learning.

Thus, the reflections demonstrate that this activity not only expanded knowledge about hoaxes and opinion writing skills but also reinforced the strategic role of teachers and students as agents of literacy and numeracy. The training created opportunities for establishing a resilient school journalism community capable of addressing the challenges of the digital era, while also making a tangible contribution to safeguarding information quality and protecting students' mental health from the negative impacts of hoaxes.

4. CONCLUSION

The school journalism training involving teachers and students has proven effective in enhancing participants' understanding of hoaxes, strengthening their opinion writing skills, and fostering literacy and numeracy awareness. Reflections show that both teachers and students became more critical in filtering information and

developed a deeper understanding of the characteristics and impacts of hoaxes on mental health. They also demonstrated the ability to distinguish between opinions, features, and news, as well as to develop writing ideas by utilizing relevant data and facts. Moreover, the training built participants' motivation and confidence to continue writing, even inspiring the idea of establishing a school journalism community as a space for ongoing collaboration. Thus, this activity not only improved individual skills but also contributed to building a resilient school community capable of confronting hoaxes in the digital era.

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