

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Exploring the efficacy of an educational approach of case-writing for remote learners: insights from a novice writer

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ETHICS APPROVAL

We did not research using Human subjects, materials or animals.

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FULL ARTICLE:

Dear Editor

We were intrigued by Matsubara et al's report introducing a big academic support team, aimed at assisting remote writers in their academic writing via an email system¹. Recently, we initiated an educational support system specifically designed for remote

novice writers engaged in case-report writing².

As a backdrop, YK has been conducting lectures titled 'How to write case reports' for fourth-year medical students at Tohoku University since 2013³. YK has extended an offer to all, stating that anyone seeking support for paper writing can receive assistance.

KA received assistance from YK, because of limited academic writing support due to lack of familiarity with writing and publication among seniors and KA's relocation to a different institution.

The educational impact of YK's activities is enhanced through a combination of the educational aspect, which involves the lectures³ available to see anytime and specific advice for a theme; and the technological aspect, represented by Google Docs, which offers real-time interactive writing and editing capabilities. This technological facilitation allows for smoother academic interactions, enabling rapid and seamless sharing of thoughts and writing through direct collaboration. By employing the 'writing-in' function, we efficiently generated sentences and paper descriptions, eliminating the need for face-to-face or web-based meetings while still incorporating detailed feedback directly within the document. This convenience proved highly advantageous, especially considering our busy schedules, as it overcame the challenges of frequent meeting scheduling.

Various educational supports were made to KA³. First, to identify a paper topic and its significance, KA received guidance to create a comparative table between his case and previous cases, examining various clinical aspects to identify unreported points as potential paper topics. Collaborating on Google Docs allowed us to co-create and discuss these tables and ideas for defining the paper's topic. Consequently, through the collaborative efforts of KA's expertise in emergency medicine and YK's knowledge in pediatrics, epileptology, and medical education, we defined the paper's topic as 'the distinct motivation of bear-associated injury patients between countries'⁴. Initially, KA had considered focusing on the

profile of physical trauma, particularly the type and severity of injuries. However, with the guidance of YK, who possessed extensive experience in identifying case topics from various angles, KA discovered a deeper subject for the paper, exemplifying the transfer of knowledge and the potential for non-specialists with unconventional perspectives to contribute novel ideas⁵. The combined educational and technological support significantly accelerated the writing process. Prior to this support, the paper's direction remained undecided for 15 months; after initiating this collaboration, it took only 2 weeks to reach the 'ready-for-submission' stage.

Our experience underscores the potential of an academic writing support system, serving as a powerful tool for researchers in any location, including rural areas, by eliminating distance barriers. Our case shares similarities with Matsubara's, as both initiatives were driven by members within medical schools, reflecting their commendable research mindset and dedication to supporting young doctors. Providing such a remote academic support system to young doctors, especially those working in rural areas, would be an ideal extension of this effort.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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