



Training and simulation of the German A2-Level writing exam for SMA/SMK students

Novia Anjani Dewi¹, Ending Khoerudin², Lucky Herliawan Y. A.³, Tri Indri Hardini⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

noviaadewi@upi.edu¹, ending.khoerudin@upi.edu², luckyherliawan@upi.edu³, tihardini@upi.edu⁴

ABSTRACT

This research is part of the Community Service Program (PkM) designed to help high school students in the Bogor area improve their skills in taking the A2 level German writing exam (Goethe-Zertifikat A2). This activity is also part of the preparation for the National German Language Olympics. The problem arises due to students' lack of understanding of the question and digital exam formats. Therefore, providing tools and training that can help overcome technical challenges and improve German writing skills is essential. This research aims to develop a training program and exam simulation based on the Moodle LMS (simujerman.com) specifically for writing skills. The method applied in this training program is a blended learning approach. The materials covered include an introduction, exam format, targeted practice questions, and simulations to improve students' readiness for the actual exam at the Olympiad. The evaluation results showed a significant improvement in students' writing skills. Thus, using the Moodle LMS has proven to facilitate self-directed learning while enhancing the effectiveness of preparation for the German language writing skills exam at the A2 level. The findings of this paper are expected to serve as a model for the development of technology-based learning, particularly in foreign language instruction.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 10 Mar 2025

Revised: 13 Jun 2025

Accepted: 16 Jun 2025

Available online: 24 Jun 2025

Publish: 27 Jun 2025

Keywords:

blended learning; German language olympics; German writing exam; LMS moodle

Open access

Curricula: Journal of Curriculum Development is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini merupakan bagian dari Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (PkM) yang dirancang untuk membantu siswa SMA/SMK di wilayah Bogor meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam menghadapi ujian menulis bahasa Jerman tingkat A2 (Goethe-Zertifikat A2). Kegiatan ini juga menjadi bagian dari persiapan untuk Olimpiade Bahasa Jerman tingkat Nasional. Permasalahan muncul karena kurangnya pemahaman siswa terhadap bentuk soal dan format ujian digital. Oleh karena itu, pentingnya untuk menyediakan alat dan pelatihan yang dapat membantu mengatasi kendala teknis serta meningkatkan kemampuan menulis bahasa Jerman. Tujuan penelitian ini berfokus dalam mengembangkan program pelatihan dan simulasi ujian berbasis LMS Moodle (simujerman.com) khusus untuk keterampilan menulis. Metode yang diterapkan dalam program pelatihan ini adalah dengan pendekatan blended learning. Materi yang disampaikan mencakup pengenalan, format ujian, latihan soal terarah, serta simulasi yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesiapan siswa dalam menghadapi ujian sesungguhnya di olimpiade. Hasil evaluasi kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kemampuan menulis siswa secara signifikan. Dengan demikian, pemanfaatan LMS Moodle ini terbukti memberikan kemudahan dalam pembelajaran mandiri sekaligus meningkatkan efektivitas dalam persiapan ujian keterampilan menulis bahasa Jerman tingkat A2. Hasil dari penulisan karya ilmiah ini diharapkan dapat menjadi model untuk pengembangan pembelajaran berbasis teknologi, terutama dalam pengajaran bahasa asing.

Kata Kunci: blended learning; LMS moodle; olimpiade bahasa Jerman; ujian menulis bahasa Jerman

How to cite (APA 7)

Dewi, N. A., Khoerudin, E., Herliawan Y. A., L., & Hardini, T. I. (2025). Training and simulation of the German A2-Level writing exam for SMA/SMK students. *Curricula: Journal of Curriculum Development*, 4(1), 679-692.

Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign language competency assessment plays an essential role in measuring language skills and assessing students' learning progress. In the context of German language learning, language skills evaluation refers to international standards, one of which is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This framework, developed by the Council of Europe, has divided language proficiency levels into six levels, from A1 to C2. It can be said that levels A1-A2 are language proficiency for beginners, B1-B2 for intermediate levels, and C1-C2 for expert levels. Level A2, which is the focus of research in this activity, reflects basic skills, including composing simple paragraphs related to everyday themes and being able to understand easy texts. German language learning in SMA/SMK at the secondary level in Indonesia aims to achieve the A2 competency level per the CEFR. International standard-based exams such as the Goethe-Zertifikat A2, developed by the Goethe-Institut, serve as a measurement tool to assess listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills in an integrated manner. Studies show that international standardized exams not only encourage students' ability improvement but also increase their motivation to study foreign languages seriously (Shukor & Sulaiman, 2022; Bai, 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

However, implementing German language competency exams often faces obstacles, especially related to the cost of implementation and limited access to adequate preparation training. Economic constraints and a lack of support programs can reduce student participation in taking international exams (Belando-Montoro et al., 2022). In the Indonesian context, this challenge is further complicated by the limited resources of trained teachers to support students' productive skills, especially writing skills. In fact, writing skills are one of the essential elements in language competency assessment because they involve critical thinking skills, language structure, and vocabulary (Cahyani et al., 2021). Furthermore, challenges in German language education include access to relevant training and examination materials. Several studies have shown that task-based learning simulations and action-oriented approaches can improve student engagement and learning outcomes in the acquisition of writing skills, as stated by the Council of Europe. This study highlights that students who can practice exam simulations are better prepared for international standards-based evaluations.

Exam-based simulations designed close to the international format can be an effective solution to overcome these obstacles. These simulations give students real-life experience in understanding the exam pattern, identifying weaknesses, and practically developing their writing skills. Previous research has also shown that intensive practice focused on specific elements of language skills can significantly improve student performance (Liu & Yin, 2021). In addition, a German exam simulation program can support students' readiness for the German Language Olympiad, which has become a competitive platform to measure the standard of German learning at the national and provincial levels. As a strategic step, this Community Service (*Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat* or PkM) program aims to design and implement training and simulation of the A2 Level writing skills exam for SMA/SMK students in Bogor and surrounding areas. By utilizing a CEFR-based approach, this research is expected to make a real contribution to improving students' writing skills and helping them achieve optimal results in German competency exams. The context of this training aims to

give SMA/SMK students in Bogor a practical experience of the A2 level writing exam, which is close to international standards. Students are expected to understand the exam format through the exam simulation and build confidence in their German writing ability. Thus, this PkM activity program is relevant and supports improving the quality of foreign language education in Indonesia. This research is also expected to contribute to developing more effective teaching approaches that suit the needs and challenges of Indonesian students.

This service and research activity was conducted in the Bogor area, West Java. The selection of the Bogor area is based on the condition of German language learning, which generally has superior potential in SMA/SMK around Bogor. The results of the initial analysis showed several obstacles, including students' lack of understanding of the question form and competency test format, especially in online testing. The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to the format of the Olympiad, which was previously conducted in person, to be online-based. This change introduced new technical challenges, such as the need to understand digital platforms and master technology that most students have not yet mastered. Recent research confirms that technology adaptation in education, particularly foreign language learning, can pose barriers if adequate infrastructure and training are not available (Bećirović et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to provide tools and training that help students overcome technical obstacles while improving their language skills.

Utilizing a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Moodle can effectively overcome technical and pedagogical obstacles. Moodle enables international standard format-based exam simulations, giving students hands-on experience recognizing question formats and types. Research shows that the integration of technology, such as LMS, in language learning can improve student learning outcomes, especially in productive skills such as writing and speaking (Akay & Koral Gumusoglu, 2020; Qaddumi & Smith, 2024). In addition, LMS-based simulations can also increase students' confidence when facing real exams (Shard & Koul, 2023). The concept of using Moodle LMS has certainly been widely applied before in German language learning. One study showed positive results from the utilization of the Moodle LMS, such as participants' perceptions of the usefulness of training, training quality, platform, and training materials (Permana et al., 2023). However, the research focuses on general German language learning, so it has not explicitly explored each language skill.

Therefore, this study will focus on developing and evaluating the effectiveness of using the Moodle LMS in a more specific context, namely, preparing participants by providing training and simulations in the A2 level German writing skills exam. This study aims to develop a training program and exam simulation based on LMS Moodle, specifically designed to train A2-level German writing skills. Thus, this research is expected to make practical and theoretical contributions related to implementing the Moodle LMS for training and exam simulations for A2-level German writing skills. The success of this service is also supported by the experience of the proposing team as a speaker in German language training, a competition judge, and a German learning content developer. This knowledge allows the implementation of directed training based on student needs. With a collaborative approach between partner schools and the proposing team, it is expected that this activity will not only improve exam results but also build a stronger German language learning ecosystem in Bogor and its surroundings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blended Learning-based Training

Blended learning is an educational method that has evolved into an academic approach that strategically combines online and face-to-face learning to achieve maximum results. Blended learning is also often referred to as the natural relationship of complementary face-to-face and online approaches and technologies (Alonso et al., 2025). This approach is designed to utilize the advantages of technology to increase learning flexibility while maintaining the element of face-to-face interaction that is essential in the learning process (Bennett et al., 2020). By integrating these two formats, blended learning allows students to learn independently through technology while receiving direct instructor guidance and feedback. In addition, blended learning enables the development of linguistic skills through easier access to learning materials. This is particularly relevant in language teaching, where each student may have different learning needs. Basically, this sense of community in blended learning is essential to create a supportive learning environment (Johler, 2022).

Utilizing online spaces that support communication and collaboration can achieve high student engagement and collaborative interaction in foreign language learning. In the context of foreign language learning, blended learning provides an opportunity to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process. Blended learning environments, which combine synchronous and asynchronous online learning with face-to-face sessions, can increase the effectiveness of language teaching (Cahyani et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2023; Nur et al., 2024). For example, online platforms can provide independent practice and simulations, while face-to-face sessions focus on communicative interaction and group discussions. Studies that have been conducted also show how various blended learning technologies, such as the flipped classroom model, can be customized to meet the needs of foreign language learning (Sotska & Trynus, 2024).

Utilization of Moodle LMS

Moodle, which stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, is a learning platform designed to assist teachers in improving the efficiency and quality of the teaching curriculum (Aljaraideh, 2019). It allows students to access various learning materials synchronously or asynchronously, thus supporting a more flexible learning experience. Moodle is designed as a system that can be utilized by teachers, learners, and anyone who needs a digital learning platform (Simanullang & Rajagukguk, 2020). This opens up opportunities to explore the utilization of Moodle in more specific learning contexts, such as training and exam simulations for A2 level German writing skills, which have not been studied much before.

Using digital tools such as a Learning Management System (LMS) in foreign language teaching can provide a more engaging and practical learning experience, allowing students to access materials anytime and anywhere. Moodle LMS is one of the online learning platforms widely used in the blended learning approach. Moodle provides features such as learning modules, exam simulations, and immediate feedback, allowing students to learn independently and intensively (Permana et al., 2022). Research shows that the use of Moodle improves student learning outcomes, especially in productive skills such as writing and

speaking (Tabibian et al., 2019). With these characteristics, Moodle is a potential platform for addressing digital-based learning challenges requiring a more targeted and interactive approach.

The Moodle LMS allows integration between online and face-to-face learning, creating a flexible and interactive learning environment. As shown in the research conducted, the implementation of Moodle in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at Kryvyi Rih National University can increase student engagement and effectiveness towards learning (Holiver et al., 2020). In addition, a study at Samara State Technical University revealed that using Moodle in distance learning English effectively improves students' language skills (Kandrashkina & Revina, 2021). Moodle facilitates the organization of learning materials, independent assignments, and assessment procedures that suit foreign language learning needs. To date, the use of the Moodle LMS has proven to receive a positive response in increasing student motivation and learning success, especially in German language learning (Permana et al., 2025).

METHODS

This service program has a high level of urgency in the context of German language learning at the SMA /SMK level in Bogor. One of the main reasons is the importance of German competency tests, which refer to the CEFR framework, as the primary tool for evaluating students' German language skills. Community Service activities based on Expertise in the Field of Science with the theme Utilization of Moodle LMS for Simulation of German Competency Test Level A2 for SMA/SMK Students in Bogor and surrounding areas are held for approximately eight months, starting from April to November 2024.

The Moodle platform, which is the main media for this simulation, is located at <https://simujerman.com>, a web exam simulation product of the research of one of the German Language Education Study Program teams of FPBS UPI. This PkM activity was conducted as training for the A2 level German writing skills exam online through the Moodle LMS platform, <https://simujerman.com> and offline exam simulations. This training is intended for SMA/SMK students in the Bogor and surrounding areas who take German subjects.

The implementation of training in PkM activities consists of two phases, namely:

1. Phase one, which includes training and mentoring on the introduction of the types of questions tested in the German writing skills exam and in the German Language Olympiad; introduction to the form of the online exam module; and exercises on working with questions on the A2 level German writing skills exam.
2. Phase two involves simulating an A2-level German writing skills test through online and offline test simulations.

In contrast to the research conducted, this study utilized the Moodle LMS in four main stages: preparation, implementation, evaluation, and final. These four stages are the result of the development and improvement of the stages applied in previous studies, so they are expected to provide more comprehensive results. For a more complete explanation of the stages, see **Figure 1**.

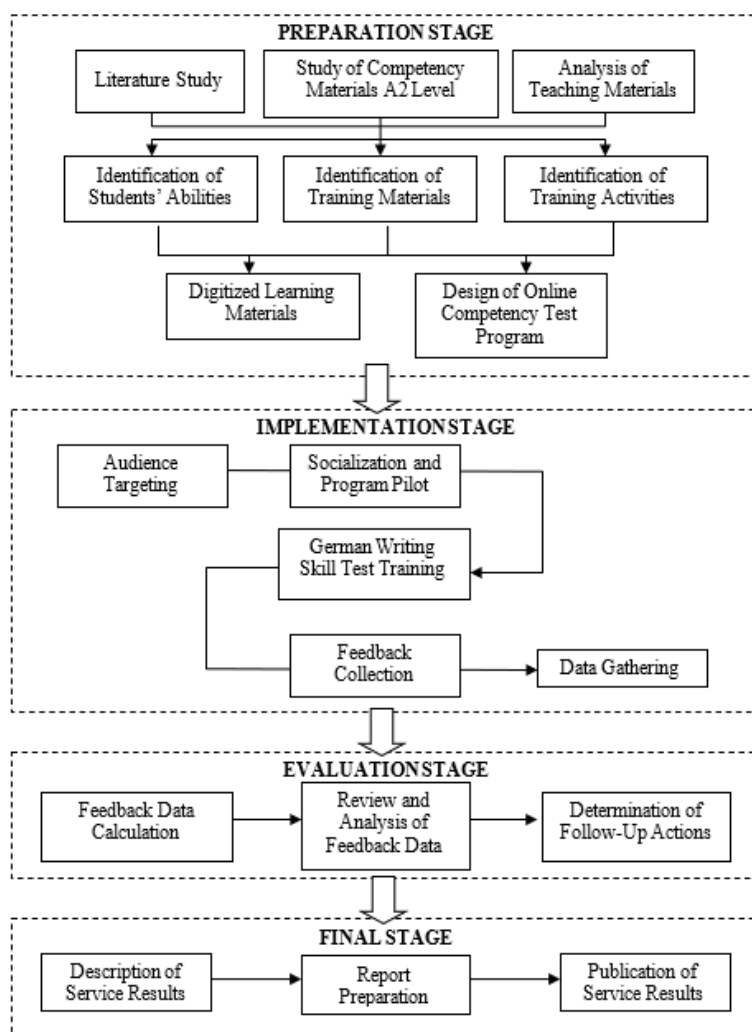


Figure 1. Flowchart of PkM Activity
Source: Research, 2024

The preparation stage in this community service program includes the process of collecting data through a literature review to explore A2-level competency material that is appropriate for SMA/SMK students in the Bogor area. This step is continued by analyzing the need for relevant teaching materials. In addition, students' abilities in understanding the A2 level writing skills test format are identified, followed by selecting appropriate training materials and planning training activities. In the final stage of preparation, learning materials are designed digitally using the Moodle LMS platform, along with the development of an online competency test simulation program.

The next stage is the implementation stage of community service activities. The implementation stage begins with selecting target schools, namely SMA/SMK in Bogor and its surroundings. Then, students are gathered through the Zoom platform to participate in socialization and an introduction to the Moodle LMS system. The following week, an online writing exam training simulation was conducted using the *simujerman.com* platform. After the simulation, feedback from participants was collected for further analysis.

The final stage is evaluation. This evaluation aims to assess the increase in students' understanding of the format and implementation of the exam after participating in the

simulation using the LMS Moodle and Zoom sessions. Based on the evaluation results, an activity report is prepared that documents the program implementation results, accompanied by scientific publications in the form of journal articles to disseminate research findings from this service program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preparation Stage

The preparation stage in this service program includes various strategic steps to ensure the success of the training and simulation of the A2-level German writing skills exam. The process at this stage begins with data collection through a literature review to explore the A2 level German competency material according to the CEFR standard, which is relevant for SMA/SMK scholars in Bogor. A needs analysis of teaching materials followed this study to ensure that the materials used can support the achievement of student competencies, especially in writing skills. In addition, students' initial abilities were identified to understand the A2 level writing skills exam format, which became the basis for developing effective training strategies. Based on this data, training materials were selected and designed in a digital format integrated with the Moodle LMS, allowing students to learn interactively, both synchronously and asynchronously (Haryadi et al., 2023).

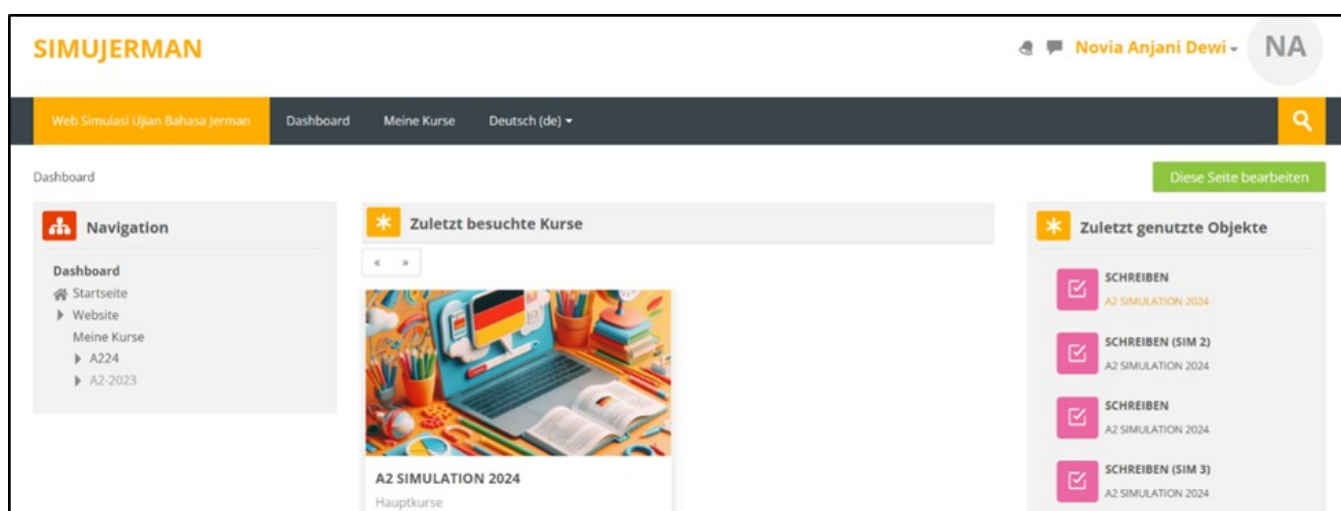


Figure 2. Main Screenshot: Collection of Questions for Training and Simulation of the A2 Level German Writing Skills Exam

Source: <https://simujerman.com>

At the same time, an online exam simulation program was developed to give students practical experience in facing the actual exam. All these steps are designed to provide a strong foundation so that the training can be effective and in line with students' needs. The display of the draft questions that have been compiled and collected has been poured into the Moodle LMS, which is used as a training platform, and a simulation of the A2 level German writing skills exam can be seen in **Figure 2**.

Implementation Stage

The A2 level German writing competency test simulation training for SMA/SMK students in Bogor and surrounding areas was approached using a blended learning-based training method, which combines synchronous and asynchronous learning to support learning flexibility and effectiveness (Cahyani et al., 2021; Riwayatningsih, 2020). In synchronous learning, students interact directly with teachers in scheduled online sessions through platforms such as Zoom and face-to-face at SMA Dwiwarna Bogor, allowing for interactive discussions and in-depth explanations. In contrast, asynchronous learning allows students to access materials independently through LMS platforms such as Moodle, whenever it suits their needs (Permana et al., 2022; Permatawati et al., 2020).

The synchronous training materials include guidelines for using the Moodle LMS and technical instructions for conducting simulation exams. The first session began with a briefing via Zoom Meeting. During this session, the instructor guided the students in understanding the format and mechanism of the A2 level writing skills test that will be taken on the simujerman.com website. After the training simulation session through the Zoom platform is completed, at the next stage, students can access the training asynchronously through the Moodle LMS, simujerman.com. Students can access this training exam wherever and whenever they want. The following is an example of one of the writing exam simulations on the page <https://simujerman.com>.

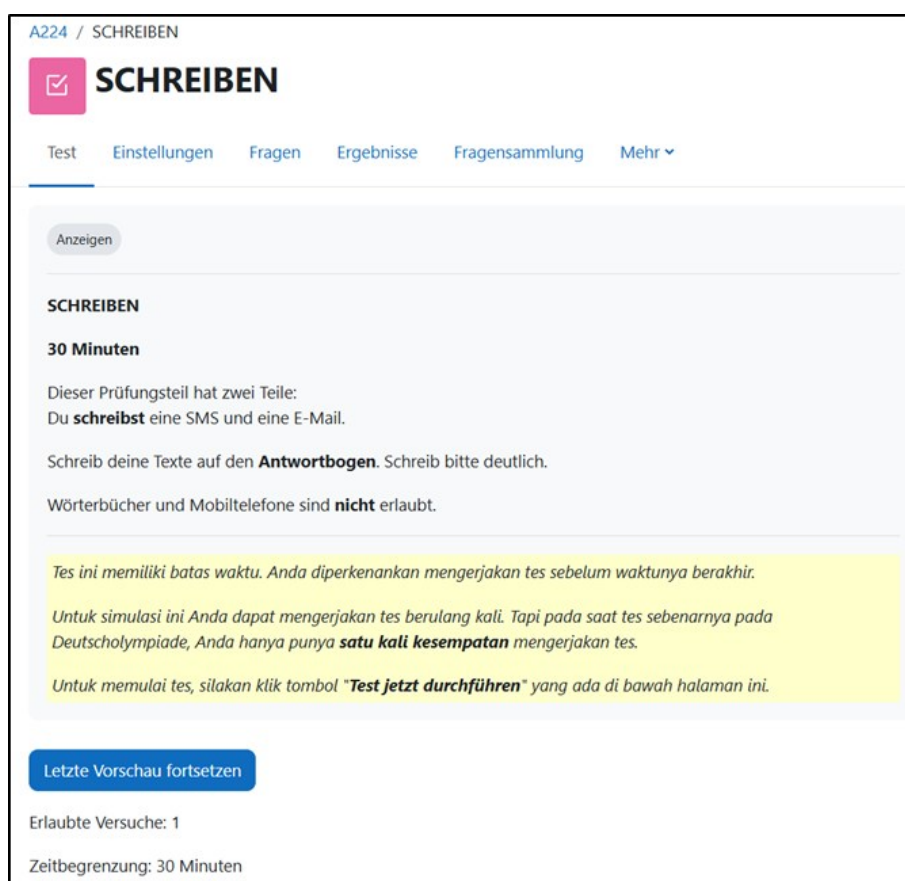


Figure 3. Simulation Page Display of German Writing Skills Exam A2 Level
Source: <https://simujerman.com>

Figure 3 shows students working on two practice questions for the A2 level writing skills exam. In this writing test simulation, students are given 30 minutes to work on the two questions. **Figure 4** shows examples of questions that students will work on.

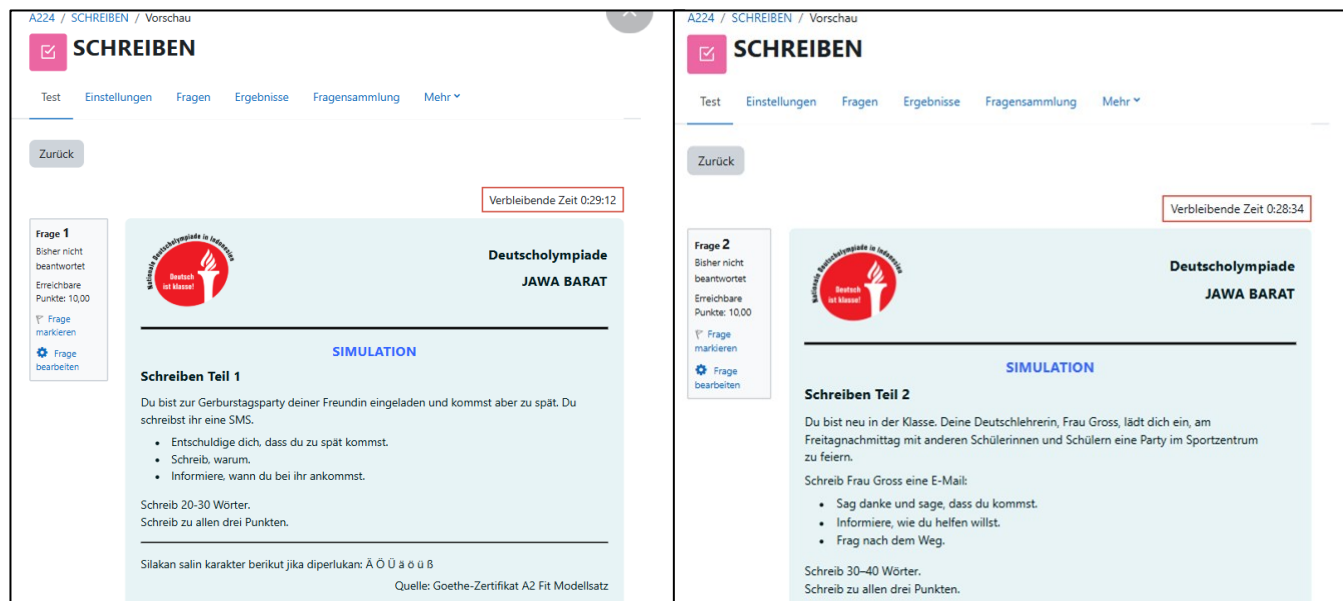


Figure 4. Display of the First and Second Example Questions in the German Writing Skills Exam Simulation A2 Level

Source: <https://simujerman.com>

To answer the first part of the question, students are required to write a reply to an SMS according to the given theme. If you want to get a perfect score, you must write the answer in approximately 30 words in good and correct German according to the rules of writing at the A2 level. To answer the second part of the question, students are required to write a reply to an email according to the given theme. If they want to get a perfect score, students must write the answer in approximately 40 words in good and correct German according to the rules of writing at the A2 level. Of course, this second question's difficulty is enhanced and can be more complex than the first question. For this writing skill simulation module, students will get feedback from the page, but it takes time. Therefore, students can see how many points they have earned and which mistakes they have made so that they can self-reflect on the feedback they have received.

In this asynchronous training, students, of course, have the freedom to access the writing test module at any time. The module is designed to allow participants to repeat exercises without time constraints, allowing for better mastery of the material. This repetition is in accordance with the principle of spaced repetition, which has been shown to improve long-term retention through revisiting the material (Tabibian et al., 2019). In addition, the asynchronous feature of the Simujerman website is designed to support self-directed learning and allow students to practice intensively until they feel confident for the exam. The flexibility of repetition allows students to tailor their study time to their individual needs, thus supporting the importance of successful self-learning.



Figure 5. Teacher Gives Directions on Exam Simulation
Source: Author's Documentation 2024

After the asynchronous learning process through the Moodle LMS platform, the next stage is the synchronous learning process with the face-to-face method directly (offline) in the classroom. This process provides understanding as well as practice writing exams directly by the teacher to the participants to perfect the previous learning process carried out online. The following is a simulation of a writing test with a live teacher (see **Figure 5**).

Evaluation and Final Stage

Of the 50 SMA/SMK students in Bogor and surrounding areas who took the German writing exam simulation through the Moodle LMS, the average score of the participants was initially at 6.3, or equivalent to 64% of the perfect score of 20. This low result was due to the students' lack of understanding of the A2 level writing exam question format and limited vocabulary on specific relevant themes. However, after the training using synchronous and asynchronous learning methods, participants showed an improved understanding of the question format and vocabulary acquisition on various themes given by the teacher. This had a positive impact, with the average score increasing to 8.2, equivalent to 79% of a perfect score. This change indicates that the training approach implemented was successful in helping students significantly improve their writing skills.

Implementing blended learning for training and simulation of the German writing skills exam at the A2 level showed considerable changes. This proves to be an efficacy of the blended learning program in improving students' learning outcomes, especially in the German writing skills exam context. Blended learning will be much more beneficial in this regard, as synchronous learning offers direct interaction between students and teachers. In contrast, asynchronous learning allows students to get their learning materials anywhere and anytime. This study found that a blended learning model based on Moodle LMS can help students understand the tested material while allowing them to practice repeatedly, improving information retention.

Utilizing Moodle LMS and the teaching approach in the blended learning model involves providing learners with opportunities for regular practice on exam writing techniques, familiarizing themselves with the exam format, thus enhancing their critical thinking. Other studies have shown that using Moodle LMS in German language teaching has a comparative advantage as it provides more flexible management and improved technical skills for learners and teachers. In addition, providing immediate feedback in synchronous sessions also plays an important role in improving students' understanding, especially in identifying mistakes that have been made, so that students can correct them so that they are not repeated. This result aligns with other findings, which state that the combination of direct learning and technology-based self-learning positively impacts student learning outcomes. Through technology-based self-learning, of course, it can provide easy access to learning resources and facilitate the assessment and feedback process (Haryadi et al., 2023).

This certainly provides a platform to showcase the creativity of Moodle LMS users. Technology integration allows students to learn at their own pace, accommodating everyone's different ability levels and learning preferences. The blended learning approach through Moodle LMS encourages the improvement of students' critical thinking skills through independent practice, direct feedback, and flexible access to learning resources. Thus, this learning method is a new form of creativity that can be one way to improve students' critical thinking skills (Samsudin & Hardini, 2019). Through this creativity program, students will engage in processes of analysis, evaluation, and problem-solving, which encourage them to think deeply and creatively in developing innovative solutions.

Asynchronous sessions conducted through the <https://simujerman.com> platform also allow the instructor to provide immediate feedback. This is in line with research, which confirms that personalized feedback in learning plays an important role in helping students understand their weaknesses and improve performance effectively (Dawson et al., 2019). The increase in results from an average of 64% to 79% after the training reflects the effectiveness of this method, which shows that the blended learning approach can improve students' language skills better than traditional learning methods, of course, with the provision of appropriate strategies (Noursi & Hussein, 2020).

The main obstacles detected, such as vocabulary deficits in some topics and differences in learners' initial competence, are important lessons to consider in developing further training. Strategies for teaching more exam-oriented topics and adding additional materials for students who have not yet reached the A2 level will also help them overcome such challenges. In addition, more actual simulations with different examiners will enhance students' experience and readiness for the actual exam. With the positive results that have been shown, the blended learning approach under Moodle LMS can be an effective learning model to support the development of foreign language competence in the future. This simulation training will emphasize the role of technology in making learning more flexible and personalized as it relates to improving foreign language writing skills.

Moodle LMS is another platform that enhances mastery of material through practice with knowledge acquisition from repeated experiences. Structured repetition in technology-based learning can accelerate students' competency improvement, especially in abilities that require intensive practice, such as writing skills (Djuhari & Faridah, 2024). However, the effectiveness of blended learning also requires support in terms of classroom management

and provision of relevant materials. Judging from the findings of this service program, students whose German level is below A2 face greater challenges when participating in the training. Therefore, taking a phased approach that tailors materials to specific ability levels can be an effective strategy to ensure the success of future trainings. In addition, synchronous training needs to be designed to maximize interactive discussions and immediate feedback, which have been shown to increase students' learning motivation (Haryadi et al., 2023). Thus, the results of this activity can serve as a basis for improving blended learning methods in foreign language teaching that are more inclusive and adaptive.

CONCLUSION

Community service activities that focus on using the Moodle LMS for simulating the A2 level German writing exam at SMA/SMK in the Bogor and surrounding areas play an important role in improving the quality of students' understanding of German language exams. Students can use this platform to hone their writing skills through relevant exam topics to prepare for the German National Olympiad. The program also serves as an indicator of students' proficiency in writing skills, one of the essential competencies in the German Proficiency Test. On the other hand, the training aims to familiarize students with the exam format and procedures so that they can be more confident in taking the actual exam. This study proves that developing a training program and exam simulation based on the Moodle LMS effectively improves A2-level German writing skills and prepares students for competency exams in a more structured and relevant manner. In addition, the high enthusiasm of students for this event is expected to increase their interest in participating in the 2024 German Olympiad. These findings highlight the importance of educational institutions adapting to technological developments in the world of learning. Education cannot ignore the ever-evolving technological advancements, which significantly impact teaching and learning. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions in schools and universities to actively organize workshops, seminars, and training related to the latest technology. This initiative aims to help teachers and students adapt to more modern learning tools, ultimately improving learning outcomes and skills needed in today's education world.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article. The author emphasizes that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism. The authors, who are also part of the Community Service (PkM) team from the German Language Education Study Program FPBS UPI, would like to express their deepest gratitude to the Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, for the financial support provided for the implementation of this activity. As the PkM team, we also greatly appreciate the cooperation established with teachers at SMA/SMK in the Bogor and surrounding areas, especially at SMA Dwiwarna Bogor, who voluntarily provided facilities to support the implementation of this service activity smoothly and successfully.

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