From Disciplines to Dialogue: Research and Writing as a Dynamic Duo for Interdisciplinary Collaboration

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Abstract. Although often viewed as distinct academic disciplines, research and writing work together in interdisciplinary teams. While research is a systematic process of inquiry aimed at finding new knowledge, solving problems, or deepening understanding of a particular topic, and writing is a cognitive and social space where disciplinary perspectives are negotiated and integrated, little is known about how writing serves as an active, integrative process that shapes and advances interdisciplinary research collaboration beyond its role as a mode of dissemination. This interpretive phenomenological study, which seeks to uncover the nature and meanings of the lived experiences of the participants, explores the views of four university teachers on how interdisciplinary collaboration—the integration of theories, methods, and concepts from multiple disciplines—creates new frameworks or solutions in research and writing for a dynamic duo. The themes that emerged from the study included coauthoring, convergence, *synergy, and reframing.* These findings reveal that interdisciplinary collaboration enhances the sharing of ideas, integration of perspectives, and creation of innovative solutions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that institutions and organizations intentionally create structured opportunities—such as joint projects, cross-disciplinary workshops, and collaborative research platforms—that encourage members from diverse fields to engage in sustained dialogue and shared problem-solving.

Keywords: *Indonesia, interdisciplinary collaboration, phenomenology, research, and writing*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Research and writing have historically been taught, practiced, and regarded as distinct phases of academic work. Research is considered the creation of knowledge, whereas writing is noted as the means of disseminating knowledge. However, this linear model misses the dynamic interplay between writing and research, particularly in interdisciplinary settings where cross-disciplinary knowledge integration is crucial (Bazerman, 2013; Frodeman, Klein, & Mitcham, 2017). Conducting thorough research and writing well are critical skills in both the academic and professional spheres. Because research provides writing with substance, and writing gives research its voice (Hendriks, 2025), both are intricately linked, although taught differently.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Research is an intellectual activity. Without research, there would have been little improvement, making it a vital tool for guiding man towards progress. It is a recognized

method of investigation that seeks to uncover, decipher, and evaluate facts, theories, and phenomena by enabling people to investigate concepts, test theories, and reach well-informed conclusions based on facts rather than conjecture (Dawson, 2007).

Research, a vital aspect of life that has the potential to enhance lives (Hendriks, 2025), is more than just an academic necessity. It is a tool for growth, progress, development, and enhancement in real-world, professional, and academic settings. Thus, if individuals understand its importance, it ensures substantial contributions to any field (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Similarly, research is significant for innovation and decision-making across disciplines (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). It is a methodical approach to addressing global inquiries, has the goal is to raising awareness of the process of comprehending the natural laws that govern the universe, as well as innovations or new ideas, dedication, and technological advantages that will enhance human welfare (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Writing, a formal style of writing used in universities, research institutions, and scholarly publications, is characterized by clear structure, objective tone, and evidence-based arguments. Its goal is to communicate ideas clearly, contribute to knowledge, and engage critically with existing literature (Hendriks, 2025). Writing is a creation of new knowledge and a shared understanding (Li & Yeh, 2024).

Writing, which facilitates critical thinking and reflection, is a generative activity that influences the construction of knowledge, not just a means of disseminating findings, claims Bazerman (2013). It facilitates scholars not only in externalizing complex ideas but also in analyzing them critically and restructuring their ideas (Sword, 2017) for deeper intellectual engagement. In essence, writing fosters deeper intellectual engagement, making it a fundamental part of the research process.

Nowadays, writing is becoming more recognized as a collaborative activity. The interdisciplinary character of contemporary research, where various viewpoints and approaches come together to address complex issues, is strengthened by the collaborative writing process (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Writing, a technical skill, improves the ethical aspect of research by transforming writing into a platform for critical self-analysis and career advancement (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018) for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration. Tackling complicated interdisciplinary collaboration entails combining disciplinary viewpoints (Repko, Szostak, & Buchberger, 2017). Thus, interdisciplinary collaboration—the utilization of resources and strengths of varied disciplines—enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of issues (Repko & Szostak, 2021). An effective interdisciplinary collaboration requires more than just sharing knowledge, for it also entails developing new conceptual frameworks and research designs in tandem with disciplinary diversity while establishing common ground (Klein, 2020).

Interdisciplinary cooperation has various potential benefits, but along with the advantages are methodological and epistemological difficulties. Researchers may not only encounter disparate terminology but also presumptions and standards for evidence in varied fields, which can hinder both communication and advancement (Barry & Born, 2013). Such a combination of expertise creates an innovative culture where researchers are more likely to question presumptions, reevaluate paradigms, and produce comprehensive, context-sensitive results (Frodeman & Briggle, 2016). Given the benefits of an effective interdisciplinary collaboration, the combination may promote progress.

Research on writing and research, as well as interdisciplinary collaboration, has been conducted. Few researchers, nevertheless, focus on the ways that writing and research can work together as a dynamic interdisciplinary collaboration. Thus, the researchers sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do researchers and writers make sense of their lived experiences in interdisciplinary collaboration?

2. In what ways do they interpret the influence of such collaboration on the development of new frameworks or solutions in their scholarly work?

III.   MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section discusses the methodological positioning, research instruments, research design, research setting, and participants. It also discusses data gathering procedures and ethical considerations. Furthermore, it discusses the data analysis.

The study values the subjective meanings and lived experiences of the participants who collaborate across disciplines (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study examines how writing serves as both a cognitive and reflective process that enhances discussion and meaning-making across disciplines (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). With an interpretivist perspective which seeks to uncover not only the nature of lived experiences but also the meanings individuals ascribe to them within their particular lifeworlds (Heidegger, 1962), the study considers the factors that not only influence interdisciplinary work in education but also emphasize the cooperative negotiation of knowledge as a dynamic, ever-changing process (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021), through the participants' answers. It recognizes the researcher as a co-interpreter, with understanding emerging through the interplay between participants' narratives and the researcher's interpretive engagement (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach, emphasizing the subjective meanings people attach to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research focuses on "studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions" (Yin, 2011, p. 7). It deals with "how

people interpret their experiences, how they construct their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). This qualitative research is a phenomenological study.

A phenomenological study "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). A phenomenological study aims to understand and describe in-depth the phenomena experienced by participants (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015) by investigating their lived experiences related to the topic. Its primary goal is to arrive at the "essence" of the phenomenon—what is universally experienced by individuals who have encountered it (Moustakas, 1994). It is less about explanation and more about deepened understanding (van Manen, 2016).

Research Setting, Participants, Sampling

This study employed a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of university teachers. It was conducted during the summer of 2025. Nine participants were selected using purposive sampling, guided by specific inclusion criteria: (a) university teachers, (b) have been teaching and (c) conducting research for at least 20 years. Only three of the nine selected participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the study, sharing their narratives and reflections relevant to the phenomenon under investigation.

Generalizability through large samples is not the goal of phenomenological research. Rather, it aims to comprehend the essence of a phenomenon as perceived by individuals. A phenomenological study typically includes 3 to 10 participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Tools and Instruments

This study employs semi-structured interviews—a flexible format that allows the researcher to use a set of guiding questions while also adapting follow-up prompts based on participants' responses—to serve as the primary data collection instrument. The format enables an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives related to the research questions and ensures consistency across interviews, while also providing the opportunity to capture rich insights. Semi-structured interviews facilitate the collection of detailed accounts that not only reveal underlying meanings but also the lived experiences of the participants (Galleta, 2013), thereby providing comprehensive qualitative data essential for answering the study's research questions.

Data Gathering Procedures

This study utilized written interviews as the primary method of data collection. Participants were provided with clear instructions and background information to help them reflect meaningfully on the main research questions and three subquestions. They were

encouraged to share their personal experiences, particularly focusing on how interdisciplinary collaboration—the integration of theories, methods, and concepts from multiple disciplines—creates new frameworks or solutions in research and writing for a dynamic duo.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout this study. Each participant received detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as participants before signing an informed consent form. Time was allotted for clarification to ensure full understanding. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no form of coercion involved at any stage of the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles, Huberman, & Saldanya, 2014). There was no coercion but rather a willingness to participate in the research (Miles, Huberman, & Saldanya, 2014). Information was considered, and participants under study were not identifiable to protect their privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (Miles, Huberman, & Saldanya, 2014). Identifiable information was excluded from the data presentation, and all personal data were securely stored and handled with ethical research standards (Tracy, 2020).

Analysis Techniques

Participants provided written responses to open-ended prompts that elicited detailed narratives about their experiences. Responses originally written in Bahasa Indonesia were translated into English. The answers to the open-ended questions were translated. Recurring categories were grouped into themes. Considering the need for immersion in qualitative research, the researcher entered the participants' world and sought the participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2009).

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the emerging themes of the study. These themes reflect the dynamic interplay between research and writing. It highlights how each contributes to building connections, fostering mutual understanding, and advancing collaborative work across disciplines.

Research Question 1 - How do researchers and writers make sense of their lived experiences in interdisciplinary collaboration?

The purpose of this question in the study was to explore and understand the essence of the lived experiences of the participants who engaged in interdisciplinary collaboration. It sought to capture not only their meanings but also emotions, challenges, and insights that they associated with their collaborative work, moving beyond surface-level descriptions to uncover the deeper structures of their experience.

This aligns with phenomenology's goal of describing and interpreting how individuals perceive and make sense of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018)—in this case, the

integration of diverse disciplines through research and writing. The following are the recurring themes.

Coauthoring. Collaboratively producing scholarly manuscripts in which each contributor's disciplinary expertise shapes the research design, analysis, and written presentation. Participants believed that writing serves not just as a means of documentation but as a dynamic process of interdisciplinary meaning-making. They believed that through a collaboration of scholarly work—sharing ownership and intellectual ownership—they could contribute their expertise to produce a shared written output that would make them grow.

Though combining one's field of knowledge with another is "time-consuming," (Participants 1, 2, 3), and "challenging, which may cause miscommunication and confusion among team members" (Participant 2), "I learned to approach writing, and finding its meaning between two disciplines—a friend from the legal field, while I am from the management field, for instance." (*Participant 1*).

Collaborative writing is an ongoing dialogue where ideas are not only clarified and challenged, but also synthesized. Through dialogue and co-writing, researchers revisit and expand their original research questions, often shifting from discipline-specific concerns to broader, more integrative inquiries (Klein, 2020).

"My writing has also become more intentional—I try to make my ideas clearer and more accessible, knowing that people from other backgrounds might read my work. Overall, it pushes me to think deeper and aim for research that connects with a wider audience" (*Participant 3*)

Convergence is the integration and alignment of diverse disciplinary perspectives, methods, and goals toward a shared research focus. In other words, it is the integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodologies into a unified research narrative that addresses a shared scholarly question. In navigating disciplinary differences, participants may encounter both tension and enrichment when navigating across disciplines.

"The challenge lies in the differences in point of view, habits, and mastery of research methods due to different disciplinary backgrounds. This results in differences in the mastery of research methods" (*Participant 1*)

"It's not always easy—there can be moments of confusion or miscommunication—but the mix of perspectives makes the process more creative and meaningful. It taught me to be more flexible, open-minded, and collaborative in my work." (*Participant 3*)

"There will be difficulties in integrating each field of knowledge, which will require extra effort from each party." (*Participant 1*)

"There is often tension between disciplines in defending their respective scientific disciplines, leading to conflict when determining the framework of thought or research methods." (*Participant 1*)

"In addition, different disciplines have different timetables. Next, as explained in the first question, communication is also a challenge because different terms and terminology must be combined so that they can be blended." (*Participant 2*)

"Allows for the dominance of one discipline in determining the research framework and research methods, which will influence the results, discussion, and conclusions." (*Participant 1*)

"Sometimes there are methodological disagreements when designing research." (*Participant 1*).

"In my experience, working on interdisciplinary projects has been both challenging and rewarding. At first, it can feel a bit overwhelming trying to understand different approaches or unfamiliar terms, but over time, it becomes a fun learning journey." (*Participant 3*)

"In my experience, one of the biggest challenges in interdisciplinary collaboration is just getting on the same page—different fields often have their own language, priorities, and ways of doing things, so it can take time to understand each other. Sometimes there are misunderstandings or even disagreements about what matters." (*Participant 3*)

"I have become rich in terms of perspectives and new approaches because more points of view can be considered." (*Participant 1*)

Convergence gives rise to epistemological adaptation where writers reflect on shifts in their thinking and methodological flexibility as they learn to respect alternative ways of knowing.

"It will slow down the process of developing a framework and cause tension when integrating the framework of thought because each discipline will maintain its scientific identity, and if there is no solution, there is a risk that research or writing will be slow or even unfinished." (*Participant 1*)

"Of course, different disciplines can also trigger differences in perspective among researchers, leading to differences in ideas, actions, or approaches to solving problems. However, one thing I like about interdisciplinary research is that it brings new skills and knowledge. I once conducted research that integrated nursing with faith, so I read extensively about philosophy and consulted theologians to generate meaningful questions." (*Participant 2*)

"Plus, working with people who think differently makes the whole process more interesting and enjoyable." (*Participant 3*)

"This is what allows me to learn new skills and expand my knowledge beyond my area of expertise." (*Participant 2*)

"Honestly, integrating theories and methods from different disciplines can feel a bit messy at first—it's like trying to mix different languages or tools that weren't originally meant to go together. But once you start finding connections, it becomes exciting. People often describe the process as a mix of trial and error, creativity, and enhanced open-mindedness. It takes patience and a willingness to learn from others, but when things start to click, it's super rewarding. You end up with a more complete and well-rounded understanding of the issue you're working on."(*Participant 3*)

"In terms of writing, interdisciplinary research can certainly help research participants improve the quality of their writing by providing feedback and criticism from each of their respective fields of expertise." (*Participant 2*)

Research Question 2 - In what ways do they interpret the influence of such collaboration on the development of new frameworks or solutions in their scholarly work?

This research question explores participants' perceptions of how interdisciplinary collaboration—particularly between researchers and writers—shapes the development of new frameworks or solutions within their scholarly work. At its core, it aims to reveal whether and how the integration of diverse perspectives, methods, and disciplinary insights leads to innovative conceptual models, theoretical approaches, or practical applications. The following are the recurring themes and sub-themes of research question 2.

Synergy. The amplified results and innovations that emerge when collaborative efforts produce more than the sum of individual contributions./ Generating richer arguments, deeper analyses, and more innovative scholarly outputs through the combined strengths of multiple collaborators.

Participants noted that interdisciplinary collaboration served as an innovation catalyst. To them, writing can serve as a powerful mechanism for generating novel frameworks and addressing multifaceted problems.

"From what I've seen, interdisciplinary collaboration sparks fresh ideas and helps create new ways of looking at things. When people from different fields come together, they each bring something unique to the table, and that often leads to solutions or frameworks that wouldn't have come up in just one discipline. It's like combining puzzle pieces from different sets to make a completely new picture. It makes scholarly work more dynamic and innovative, and it pushes us to think outside the usual boxes we're used to." (*Participant 3*)

"I also believe that this interdisciplinary research will give rise to two new theories that will enrich scientific knowledge," (Participant 1), because "you get to see things from angles you wouldn't normally consider, and that opens up new ideas." (*Participant 3*)

"If there is common ground, they can create opportunities for a new framework, combining both disciplines to produce a new conceptual framework or methodology that is more contextual and applicable." (*Participant 1*)

"Not only in research, but actually, the current trend in the workplace is also collaboration between various fields. So, in my opinion, research greatly influences the way of thinking, writing, and research results. Regarding thinking: interdisciplinary collaboration helps develop perspectives through various viewpoints, enabling a broader understanding of a topic, enhancing analytical skills to be more effective and efficient, fostering creativity, and generating new methodologies that are more effective and efficient in solving problems." (*Participant 2*)

Merging Theoretical Lenses. Participants often note that blending theories across disciplines opens up richer, more inclusive conceptual frameworks. This synthesis enables them to see problems from multiple dimensions (Klein, 2020; Repko & Szostak, 2021).

"Through this collaboration, many collaboration frameworks can be produced (*Participant 2*)

"For me, the integration process is a process of finding common ground to complement each other, starting from theory, conceptual framework, and research methods" (*Participant 1*).

"I believe that this has significantly shaped the way I think, write, and produce research that is more open and cross-perspective, allowing me to think outside the box." (*Participant 1*)

Generating Hybrid Methodologies. Interdisciplinary writing encourages methodological experimentation, where tools and approaches from different fields are combined to form more adaptive research designs (Barry & Born, 2013).

"But the benefits outweigh the challenges. You get to learn so much from others, broaden your perspective, and come up with more creative and well-rounded solutions." (*Participant 3*)

"A new conceptual framework/model/blueprint will be created, which will serve as a reference for future research development." (*Participant 1*)

"I am pleased with this interdisciplinary research because, as an educator, I can develop networking that leads to new opportunities for research and collaboration." (*Participant 2*)

"In addition, collaboration among researchers will undoubtedly encourage them to think more critically, better, and more effectively. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration can help researchers gain a better understanding of the complexity of issues and the need

for a broader approach. Collaborative research certainly enhances effective cooperation with people from various disciplines." (*Participant 2*)

Reframing.The process of reinterpreting or viewing a problem, idea, or framework from a new perspective, shaped by interdisciplinary insights. Rethinking research problems, concepts, or interpretations in writing by viewing them through the lenses of multiple disciplines. Interdisciplinary writing channels researchers to fundamentally rethink how they define problems and evaluate solutions, which enhances the depth and relevance of their scholarly work.

"The publication network will become increasingly widespread." (*Participant 1*)

"As educators and researchers, we must have solutions to these challenges. I suggest that researchers have clear and shared goals, communicate more effectively and openly, and not wait around." (*Participant 2*)

The act of writing with collaborators from diverse fields leads to greater awareness of one's assumptions, deepening critical reflection and intellectual humility (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

"Interdisciplinary collaboration has changed the way I think and write. It's helped me become more open to different viewpoints and more thoughtful about how I approach problems. I've learned to ask better questions and consider factors I might have overlooked if I were working within just one field." (*Participant 3*)

Participants report that interdisciplinary outputs are more likely to produce solutions applicable to real-world contexts and societal needs. Given this, it will enhance relevance and social impact (Holley, 2020)

"I noticed that colleagues from different fields appreciated it when I offered to collaborate with them on research. For example, as someone from the nursing field involved in healthcare, I offered to collaborate with the IT field, and they were surprised to learn that many things can be accomplished through collaboration with nursing. Nursing is closely related to technology. There are many things that can be done to improve health, such as creating a website that provides up-to-date health information, whose impact can be evaluated and researched. Many other things cannot be listed one by one. Nursing is also closely related to spirituality, as research indicates that a person's spiritual level significantly enhances the healing process. Nursing can collaborate with other fields such as pharmacy, biology, nutrition, and others." (Participant 2)

V.   CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of rigorous research and writing in fostering productive interdisciplinary engagement. Participants' lived experiences demonstrate how, in collaborative academic settings, research and writing work in tandem, each influencing,

molding, and improving the other. Findings—coauthoring, convergence, synergy, and reframing—reveal that writing facilitates the negotiation of ideas, the bridging of disciplinary boundaries, and the creation of new knowledge, rather than simply a way of presenting research.

Writing—a forum for discussion where various viewpoints converge as researchers cross disciplinary boundaries—enhances the reflectiveness, inclusivity, and inventiveness of the research process. These revelations support the necessity of rethinking that writing can be a crucial research collaborator, especially in interdisciplinary collaboration.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that academic institutions and research teams intentionally design structures and opportunities that foster collaborative research and writing as integrated processes rather than separate tasks. Facilitating spaces for coauthoring, promoting convergence through interdisciplinary dialogue, encouraging synergistic problem-solving, and embracing reframing as a tool for innovation can enhance both scholarly output and intellectual growth. Workshops, writing retreats, and cross-disciplinary mentorship programs can be established to strengthen these practices, ensuring that writing serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a dynamic process of knowledge creation and a disciplinary bridge-building tool.

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