

Evaluation results: Academic Writing (April 01-02, 2020)

Course details

Instructor: Melanie Lynn Conrad

More information is provided on the webpage: <https://www.bgc-jena.mpg.de/domains/imprs-gbgc.de/index.php/Courses/ScientificWriting2020>

7 out of 12 participants filled in the survey by April 03, 2020

Survey results

How would you evaluate the workshop?

	Very good	++	+	+-	+	++	very bad
Quality of contents	5		2				
Quality of presentation	5		2				
Opportunities for interaction	4		3				
Practicality of exercises	6		1				
Was the trainer competent	5		2				
Was there a productive working atmosphere?	6		1				
Did the trainer respond to your questions?	4		3				
Practicality for your work	4		2				
Overall assessment	4		2				

What topics did you find particularly interesting? Were there any highlights?

- I think the contents concerning the structure of different parts of a paper (abstract, introduction, discussion) is particularly interesting to me. Highlights are examples of good and bad writings.
- It was particularly interesting to learn techniques on how you can approach writing. I enjoyed the exercises a lot and it was very nice that although the course was online we could work on smaller groups for some exercises.
- The tips for how to write introduction is very useful and helpful. After learning this, I got ideas to write not only the introduction but also the abstract.

- There was a really structured description of how to write scientific text. There were lots of interactions, which is nice to keep the focus. Most of the explanation were also practised in exercises, which solidifies most of the concepts mentally.
- I enjoyed the holistic approach to writing
- How to structure an individual paragraph: topic sentence – body sentence – conclusion sentence (2)

What was lacking at the workshop?

- Nothing (3)
- How to write a paper logically. Sentence organisation (for example, do not use a too long subject in a sentence)
- If time is permitted, could you add some content about how to write a grant/proposal? I think it's also important for a scientist who want to improve the writing skills.
- I get that when there are 12 participants, it is difficult for the trainer to go over all the abstract. But still, I'd like to have at least a scan of the abstract from the trainer and a quick opinion on a striking positive/negative in the abstract. Another thing that was lacking a bit was using the material that we brought to its full extent. Now only one other person read the abstract of someone else, but maybe we could have condensed it to a striking positive/negative. This way, the practical knowledge is also shared with examples from oneself. Something similar could be done with the piece of introduction that we wrote. We talked about it, but just in vague and general terms not to make it too personal.
- I was not "missing" it but it would have been interesting to hear a bit more about psychology of a readers mind... (sometimes these information were given). It also would have been nice to get maybe some recommendations for (outstanding) books about scientific writing. But these are very minor suggestions.

What could have been left out?

- The introduction took too much time.
- Nothing (3)
- I also liked the plain language explanation of the science project to different focus groups, but hearing this from 12 different people was a bit tedious.
- The review process part
- The exercise with the water bottle was in my opinion to long
- authorship

Which future workshops (dealing with soft skills or management) would you consider of interest?

- Soft skills
- Oral presentation workshop; dealing with stress in academia.
- I would be more interested in reading skills or time management: e.g. how to read more papers within certain time, how to choose papers...
- Presentation skills (also on pico/lightning talks) (2)
- Research and grant proposal writing in detail
- Leadership

Do you have any other comments or questions?

- no (2)
- I had reservations about the course being online but I was pleasantly surprised by how well everything worked out. And I think Dr. Conrad did a great job at creating an interactive atmosphere into this new, often monotonous, online format.
- I really enjoyed the course, even though it was offered via webconf!
- Do you have any recommendation for good books?
- I was impressed how got it worked out to do the course via zoom; yet I still prefer to sit in the same class room with everybody
- Some times I had the feeling the course was more general about Good scientific practice/what makes science good rather only scientific writing
- We had to prepare an abstract. But we didn't really know why. If I had known, that someone who is not familiar with biology at all would proofread it, I would had written it different. Short: we didn't knew the audience for the abstract.