prbb intervals
Continuing Professional Development Programme
Space for Reflective Learning

PRBB Intervals Course Proposal

Course Title
Becoming a scientific writer: Putting 'Why' before 'How'

Proposed date(s) 2nd & 3th of July

Course Language
English

Course Leader(s) and very brief summary of relevant qualifications and experience (no more than 2 lines for each trainer)
Gavin Lucas is a biomedical scientist with more than 13 years of experience in research and scientific publishing, and 15 years of experience as an author's editor, consultant and trainer.

Rationale for course (why is this course of interest for the PRBB staff?)
This workshop takes an important qualitative step beyond '*HOW to do scientific writing*', and provokes publishing scientists to ask *'WHY do I write it like this?*'. It's important for us to have a clear perception of what motivates us as writers, what causes our most common mistakes, how our readers perceive our work, and of what makes good scientific writing attractive and accessible. This new perspective will inspire publishing scientists to become more effective, more autonomous, and more productive science communicators.

Course aim - general
The aim of this course is to help publishing scientists develop a more impartial, analytical view of scientific writing, to better understand their readership, and to make them more efficient writers and editors. Their writing will no longer be driven by the standard formula for 'How?' to write a paper, but will be inspired by the question, 'Why?'

Specific learning outcomes (what new skills, knowledge &/or attitudes will participants to take away from the course?)
In this workshop, participants will develop a deeper understanding of the structure of scientific papers, with a renewed focus on the purpose of each section and the connections between them. They will gain a global framework for conceptualising the entire publishing process, how to create an expectation in the reader and then deliver on that expectation, and how to make the qualitative jump from a passive scientific account to an active scientific argument. Finally, we will explore some common problems of language construction that make scientists' writing unclear, and why we are prone to these problems; we will practice some intuitive editing tools to address them.
Furthermore, we will explore how AI tools can be used to support our writing.

Course contents (outline of topics to be covered)
- Five stages of Publishing
- The Reader

- Creating an Expectation: Destination and Roadmap
- Building structure and connectivity
- From scientific report to a scientific argument: Sentence Outline
- Writing for Readability – words, sentences, and paragraphs
- Using AI in Scientific Writing

Training methods

This is a highly interactive training workshop with extensive elements of partner work, exercises, group discussion. We place a special emphasis on sharing and learning from participants' own expertise and experience. We will work with papers from the participants' field, including their own papers.

Target group in PRBB (Senior scientists, postdocs, predocs, management/admin staff, all residents)

Mid-career scientists; late pre-docs and post-docs

Number of participants (maximum)

16

Total course hours (Please specify: a) direct training with instructor present b) required self-study.

Note: only the direct training hours will be included in the post-course certificate.

a) Direct training: 14 hours
b) Self-study: 1-2 hours

Distribution of course (hours/days)

Two 7- hour sessions (2 full days).

Pre-course preparation and/or between sessions?

Before the course the trainer will send some reading material and a simple preparatory task based on a published paper from the participant's field.

Material participants need to bring (laptops, etc…)

None

Relevant background reading/audiovisual/websites or other materials

None