

Can a workshop improve your scientific writing?

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How could you improve your scientific writing skills? Two months ago I talked about books. Another idea would be a scientific writing workshop. This weekend I attended such a workshop, organized by Julia Klapproth and Barry Drees from Trilogy Writing & Consulting.

The workshop was organized as a 1 1/2 day course with many group exercises. We learned about good scientific language, tables and graphs and other typical aspects of manuscript writing. Stuff you will also find in books such as this one. But a workshop is certainly a better learning experience – and more fun.

To my surprise the most important lesson was something else. Good scientific writing always has a message, targeted towards the audience. This is probably obvious for anybody with basic experience in journalism. But it is easier said than done when the results of your experiments are complicated and not easily fit into a model. I will try much harder to keep this in mind, e.g. by making sure that the abstract and tables/figures can speak for themselves.