The Write Stuff

Boosting your writing into a higher orbit

In this issue...

Setting up a writing critique group

– Tacey A. Rosolowski

Professional writers know that input from readers is essential for their success. Many leverage the power of numbers by joining a critique group that provides feedback from multiple perspectives. A critique group can be equally important to researchers, who rely on writing to secure grants and place articles that grow a career. (Listen to the [story](#) of how the Department of Surgical Oncology used critique to build faculty success.) A good critique group not only provides feedback. It's a setting where members develop their writing skills so they can avoid

relying on "clinical intervention by language or writing advisers at the point of crisis," according to researchers Aitchison and Lee (1). No less important, a strong group engages members with the craft of writing through a network of relationships that can serve as a support system.

Given the benefits, it's no surprise that some critique groups endure for years. When they do, it's because members know that critique is a delicate process and they have mitigated the interpersonal stresses that can break up a group. It's important for any group to start off on the right track, so this article provides an overview of how to create an effective group with good communication. This information will also be useful if you are at the point of asking someone to read your work or if you want to be a more effective reader. If you are already involved in critique, it will give you a new way to think about reader-writer communication.

Setting up your group

First, think carefully about who you invite to join. A mix of disciplines and specialties can be helpful to writers who must communicate clearly to a range of audiences. Aim for varied publishing histories, skill levels, and styles of communication. Look for good communicators who listen well and who know when to be assertive and when to let someone else take the floor.

Next, decide on a format. Do you prefer a face-to-face group or online meetings via a conferencing service such as Zoom (see Resources)? Quarterly or monthly meetings? How long should the sessions be? How many writers will share work at each meeting, and will they send work in advance or distribute or read portions aloud at the meeting? There is no right answer. The ideal format is what works for everyone and the types of writing you intend to share. Agree to a format and then try it for a few meetings before assessing and modifying. In one commonly used model (2), the writer sits silently as readers present feedback but may respond during a discussion period. In any format, you must manage time, so decide on the time allotted for each writer to present. To minimize meandering discussions, consider a rule that writers cannot critique their own work while presenting. Determine a time limit for readers' feedback and appoint a timekeeper to keep people on track.

Readers tend to be kinder with their feedback when they know they will soon be on the writer's hot seat. Nonetheless, writers inevitably feel vulnerable in a critique group. To help groups avoid these situations, consider the following question: "If an artist invited you to her studio and asked you for impressions of a painting, would you grab a brush and start 'fixing' it to please yourself?" The answer is obvious: you wouldn't, not unless you were incredibly presumptuous. Unfortunately, people often are presumptuous when giving writing critique and this can lead to interpersonal stress. Groups need to keep in mind that the aim is *not* for a reader to show the writer how to produce work that *the reader* might have written. Critique aims to help the writer find his or her own voice.

Tips for writers: Cooling down the hot seat to start the communication process

Writers often hand over a piece of work with the attitude, "I'll take whatever comes." This can yield useful feedback, but asking for what you need is even better. That means you have to know what you need, and surprisingly few writers think about this. Take time to ask, "Where am I in the writing process?" and "What type of feedback will help me move ahead right now?" Requests can range from "I'll take whatever feedback you have to give" to "Please just give me your general impressions." One goal is to help your readers focus and use their time well. A second is to build your skill. You start to analyze when you say, "I don't think my abstract flows well and my methods section seems hard to follow. Do you have suggestions for me?"

By analyzing your work technically, you will start to depersonalize it so you can receive feedback less emotionally. You grow the thick skin all writers need to survive the hot seat. These skills will serve you as you navigate throughout publishing life.

Finally, by thinking about what you need *now,* you learn about your writing process. At times, reams of feedback can be so daunting that a writer will lose energy and procrastinate, compromising the ability to meet deadlines. If intuition tells you this might happen, ask specifically for what can move you forward. Inevitably, readers have responses to many aspects of your work, but sometimes knowing that you can set the limits on feedback can help you relax. You may find that you are open to additional topics in the discussion period.

At this point, you might be thinking, "Peer reviewers of grant applications and articles often pay no attention to this kind of thing, so why should a critique group be different?" The answer: because critique groups run on interpersonal relationships among human beings with messy writing processes and emotional reactions. Sensitivity to this fact will ensure that your group works well and endures. Start with a higher level of sensitivity so group members build trust, instead of going in with a "fix the painting" style that may require mending broken relationships later.

Tips for readers: Building trust and gaining insight

A reader should bring all of his or her expertise to critique and, at the same time, refrain from "fixing the work." It's easy to maintain this spirit if readers offer feedback in the first person to acknowledge they are giving opinions, not "writing truth." The statement, "I found the pacing slow here because I felt this information had already been communicated on page X," signals respect between colleagues, whereas "This is repetitive with slow pacing" sounds more like a marginal note from teacher to student. In addition, statements such as, "I don't think this works," "I found this unclear," or "I don't see your point" don't offer much help, so ideally the "I" statement contains a reaction *and* a reason that points to a solution*: "*I found the section on the scientific premise unclear because I didn't see a lot of references to previous research. I wondered whether another non-expert would have the same reaction." Readers should not forget to give positive feedback and include reasons here, too, since every writer needs to know what worked—and why—in order to be able to repeat it.

Giving reasons has an additional benefit: it forces readers to attend closely to the writing craft. Many readers feel that critique is only a price they pay to have their own work read. However, readers sharpen their analytical skills when they challenge themselves to offer writers reasons such as, "This sequence of ideas didn't convince me because I didn't see a synthesis of the specifics into a conclusion." Readers can exploit this benefit in their own writing by asking themselves key questions: "How can I push myself to analyze?" "What can I learn about good strategies or missteps?" "What can I learn about my own style from reading others' work?" "What can I learn about the writing process so I can manage my own more effectively?"

Another moment of awareness may come when a group has worked on multiple drafts from one piece of writing over a long period. Readers may have previous discussions in mind when they work with a new revision so they fail to notice missing information or are less effective at identifying new problems. Readers need to acknowledge when they are no longer helpful and the time has come for the writer to seek a fresh reading from another set of eyes. The best critique groups are based in trust and good communication as well as expertise. Members know they can rely on their colleagues to prioritize their best interests and support the future of their work.

Resources: How to use Zoom for online meetings

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362613-How-Do-I-Host-A-Video-Meeting-

https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/zoom-host-meeting-and-invite-participants

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NIH clarifies terminology regarding rigor of the prior research

– Don Norwood

In 2015, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced an increased focus on the reproducibility of NIH-funded research and asked applicants to address and reviewers to evaluate the following four topics: 1) the scientific *premise* for the proposed research, 2) the scientific *rigor* of the proposed research, 3) relevant biological variables for studies in vertebrate animals and humans, and 4) authentication of key biological and chemical resources (see *The Write Stuff*, Autumn 2018). However, in the ensuing years, the NIH discovered that both applicants and reviewers were confused about the parameters of the scientific premise. To clear up that confusion, late in 2018, the NIH announced a change in terminology.

Specifically, in the instructions for career and development award applications due on or after January 25, 2019, the term "scientific premise" has been replaced with "rigor of the prior research." In the Significance section, applicants are advised to "Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research (both published and unpublished) that serves as the key support for the proposed project." In the Approach section, applicants are advised to "Describe plans to address weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project."

Even though this wording has changed, the substance of the Significance and Approach sections has not. The applicant, by explaining the rigor of the prior research in these two sections and supporting this claim by including the details recommended in the previous paragraph, should establish the prior research as the foundation on which the application is built and provide a basis for the specific aims.

A potentially helpful approach is to think about these changes from the perspective of a reviewer evaluating an application using the NIH's scored review criteria. Two new questions have been added to these criteria. For the Significance section, reviewers must ask themselves whether the prior research serving as the key support for the proposed project was rigorous. For the Approach section, reviewers must ask whether the investigators described plans to address weaknesses in the rigor of their own or others' prior research.

The NIH has provided handy charts explaining the new reproducibility guidelines on their Grants & Funding website.

Sources

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Lauer M. Open Mike: Resources for Rigorous Research. https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2018/12/13/resources-for-rigorous-research/. Accessed March 14, 2019.

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Scientific Publications' grant proposal editing service

– Stephanie Deming

In 2018, the editors in the Department of Scientific Publications edited 214 grant proposals for MD Anderson faculty and trainees. We consider grant proposal editing a high-priority service because grants fuel the important research conducted at MD Anderson and support training of oncologists and cancer researchers.

We edit proposals for submission to the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen, and other government agencies, professional organizations, and private foundations. We also edit proposals for internal funding, such as Institutional Research Grants and Moon Shots Program awards. We do not edit fellowship proposals for which the applicant's writing skill is one of the review criteria, such as Odyssey Program proposals.

When we edit a proposal, we first ensure that it complies with the funder's instructions. We then ensure that grammar and English usage are correct, and we offer suggestions as needed regarding clear and concise writing, effective organization, effective use of figures and tables, and consistent formatting to maximize readability. We try to help applicants shorten proposals that exceed the funder's page or word limits.

For National Institutes of Health research proposals, we generally edit the Project Narrative, Project Summary/Abstract, Introduction (for resubmission or revision applications), Specific Aims, and Research Strategy (Significance, Innovation, and Approach subsections). We often also edit the Personal Statement and Contributions to Science sections of the biosketch, the Budget Justification, the Vertebrate Animals section (when included), letters from collaborators, and/or the cover letter. We edit similar sections of other types of grant proposals. We also edit letters of intent, progress reports, and replies to requests from funding agencies. Like our other services, proposal editing is provided free of charge.

We ask that applicants simultaneously submit all pieces of the proposal that they would like us to edit. However, there is one exception to this general rule: we are happy to review the Specific Aims section by itself, before we review the other sections, because applicants often use the Specific Aims section as a template for the rest of the proposal.

Because editing a proposal typically takes many hours, we encourage (but do not require) applicants to schedule proposal editing in advance by emailing a request to scientificpublications@mdanderson.org. The request should include the details listed here. Requests to preschedule proposal editing must be received at least 1 month before the deadline for submission to the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) or Office of Research Administration (ORA), and proposals must be sent to Scientific Publications for editing at least 2 weeks before the deadline for submission to the OSP or ORA. If proposal editing is not prescheduled, we will still try to help, but we may not be able to edit as thoroughly or as quickly as we can when editing is prescheduled.

In addition to editing proposals, Scientific Publications offers educational resources on proposal writing, including workshops, video recordings of lectures, and a webinar (look for "Grant Proposal" under "Webinars"). An editor is available for one-on-one consultations the third Thursday of each month from noon to 4 p.m. in the Research Medical Library conference room; no appointment is needed. We also offer one-on-one consultations by appointment; these can be arranged by contacting an individual editor, calling the department at 713-792-3305, or emailing the department at scientificpublications@mdanderson.org.

European Plan S aims to mandate open access by 2020

– Amy Ninetto

In September 2018, a group of European research funding agencies called cOAlition S announced Plan S, an ambitious program that aims to fundamentally change the economic structure of scientific publishing. According to Robert-Jan Smits, the special envoy on open access for the European Commission, the *S* can stand for "science, speed, solution, shock" (1). The key principle of Plan S is that "after 1 January 2020 scientific publications on the results from research funded by public grants provided by national and European research councils and funding bodies, must be published in compliant Open Access Journals or on compliant Open Access Platforms" (2). In short, starting in 2020, cOAlition S members will require that all publications resulting from their grants be free for anyone to read and distribute immediately upon publication.

The members of cOAlition S, which include nearly 20 research funders that together provide almost $9 billion in annual funding (1), believe that "publication paywalls are withholding … research results from a large fraction of the scientific community and from society as a whole" and that this state of affairs is "profoundly at odds with the ethos of science" (3). Thus, Plan S is designed to drive a radical shift from the current subscription-based publishing model, in which institutions and individuals pay for access to journal articles, to a "gold" open access model, in which publishing costs are underwritten by authors and research funders instead of readers. (See the Winter 2018 issue of *The Write Stuff* for a more detailed explanation of different open access models.)

cOAlition S will establish criteria by which open access journals and platforms can demonstrate compliance with Plan S, such as registration in the Directory of Open Access Journals or Directory of Open Access Repositories and commitment to the standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics. Plan S specifically does not consider "hybrid" open access journals to be compliant (4). Hybrid journals keep their newest material behind a paywall, where it is accessible only to those who pay subscription or per-article fees, but they make older material

freely accessible after an embargo period. However, some European scientists expressed concerns that the plan's near-immediate prohibition on publishing in hybrid journals would effectively prohibit them from publishing in many of the world's highest-impact scientific journals (an estimated 85% of existing journals are not currently Plan S compliant) (1, 5, 6). In response to these concerns, new Plan S guidelines allow cOAlition S-funded articles to be published in hybrid journals that have a plan to convert to full open access by 2023 (7). Alternatively, authors can deposit their accepted manuscripts in a compliant open repository (4). The cOAlition S members also pledged to support the development of open publishing, archive, and data repository infrastructures (2, 4).

Under the current Plan S guidelines, authors will own the copyright on their publications but will be required to use a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license, which allows anyone, including commercial entities, to use and reuse the published material without restriction, provided that credit is given to the author(s) (4). Some researchers have suggested that Creative Commons licenses that permit only noncommercial reuse should also be permitted, but thus far, the Plan S guidelines do not allow this distinction (4, 6).

Because most open access journals are funded by article processing charges (APCs) paid by authors or funders rather than by subscriptions, the members of cOAlition S have pledged to provide funding to cover APCs. Moreover, Plan S aims to standardize and cap APCs across Europe (4). Although research communities have generally expressed support for Plan S's principle of free access to information, some researchers in inadequately funded fields and in low- and middle-income countries are concerned that Plan S may cause APCs to rise to unaffordable levels, making it more difficult for them to publish their work (6). cOAlition S has not yet announced what the proposed cap on APCs will be. Publishers, perhaps unsurprisingly, have expressed concern about Plan S's effect on their business models; in particular, publishers of smaller independent and society-sponsored journals worry that they may not be able to survive on APCs alone, leading to additional consolidation in the academic publishing industry (6-8).

Since the announcement of Plan S last fall, a few funders in Asia and Africa have joined cOAlition S, and government research bodies in China and India have announced support for the Plan S principles. Major government funders in the United States, Canada, Japan, and Russia, however, told *Science* magazine that they are not yet ready to require immediate open access on Plan S's terms (9). (For comparison, the Public Access Policy of the US National Institutes of Health allows an embargo period of up to 12 months before publications must be made freely accessible.)

MD Anderson researchers who collaborate with European researchers funded by the agencies listed here may want to discuss their publishing plans for 2020 and beyond with their European colleagues in light of Plan S.

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NIH tip: Check your funding opportunity announcement 30 days before submitting your grant application

– Tammy Locke

Before you submit your next National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant application, be sure to review your funding opportunity announcement (FOA) one more time to make sure nothing has changed since you began writing your application, which was likely months before the submission deadline. This advice, published in the *NIH Extramural Nexus* blog, will help ensure your compliance with the most recent NIH guidelines.

To reduce your chances of surprises at the end of the application process, the NIH recommends that you review the "Related Notices" in Part 1 of your FOA 30 days before you submit your application. In this section, you will be notified of any "changes in key dates, updates to application instructions, notices of new policies and other 'need to know' information."

For an example of the Related Notices section in a specific FOA, see the parent announcement (or broad FOA) for the NIH Research Project Grant (R01), PA-19-091. (The Related Notices section appears close to the beginning of the FOA.)

Source

Open Mike. *Extramural Nexus*. Always Check Your FOA for New Related Notices 30 Days Before Submission. https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2018/12/12/always-check-your-foa-for-new-related-notices-30-days-before-submission/. Accessed March 15, 2019.

Unusual terms used in scientific writing and publishing: "Blinded" peer review and clinical trials

– Bryan Tutt

Metaphors that refer to disabilities should generally be avoided in medical writing (1). Phrases such as "turned a deaf ear" or "the blind leading the blind" show insensitivity to people who have these conditions. Nevertheless, in biomedical writing, the metaphoric use of "blind" is widely accepted for describing the peer review process and clinical trials.

Peer review. The word "blind" is used to describe confidentiality in the peer review process for academic and scientific journals. In a double-blinded peer review, reviewers' identities are hidden from authors, and authors' identities are hidden from reviewers (2). In a single-blinded peer review, reviewers' identities are hidden from authors, but authors' names are not hidden from reviewers. An open peer review is not blinded, and neither reviewers' nor authors' identities are hidden. The information for authors on a journal's website usually describes the type of peer review the journal practices and the implications for manuscript preparation and submission. For instance, journals that use double-blinded peer review may require authors to submit their title page as a separate document or exclude their institution's name from the text.

Clinical trials. "Blinding" or "masking" in clinical trials refers to concealment of the type of treatment that is given (e.g., experimental drug vs. standard of care) from individuals involved in the trial (e.g., patients, health care providers). Blinding is done to control for the placebo effect in patients and to avoid bias on the part of researchers. A single-blind trial is one in which the treatment is concealed from patients but not providers (3); a double-blind trial is one in which the treatment is concealed from both patients and providers; and a triple-blind trial is one in which the treatment is concealed from patients, providers, and data analysts (4). In contrast, an open-label trial is one in which the treatment is not concealed from anyone involved in the study (3). However, these terms are often used loosely and inconsistently, according to the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) guideline. CONSORT suggests that authors explicitly state how blinding was carried out and how its success was determined (5).

Fun fact: The first blinded clinical study was led by Benjamin Franklin in 1784 (6).

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Upcoming events for authors

Please see the [Scientific Publications](#) website for more information on our educational courses.

Short Courses in Scientific English for Non-Native Speakers of English. Courses last 7 weeks and meet twice a week for 1 or 1.5 hours each day. Classes are held early in the morning, during the lunch hour, or late in the afternoon. Classes are free of charge. Participants must speak English at the intermediate or higher level and be familiar with research and general biomedical terminology.

Dates are subject to change. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications; now accepting applications for the waiting list.

Details: Mark Picus (mapicus@mdanderson.org), 713-792-7251, or John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

Session 3 – May 13 through June 27, 2019

Pronunciation 2, Conversation 1, Conversation 2, Writing 2

Friday Conversation Group. The Friday Conversation Group provides an informal atmosphere for non-native speakers of English to practice their conversational abilities, learn more about American culture, and meet new friends. The class meets every Friday in the Mitchell Building (BSRB), room S3.8003, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm.

No registration is required. Details: Mark Picus (mapicus@mdanderson.org), 713-792-7251, or John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

Third Thursday Writing Retreat. The Department of Scientific Publications and the Research Medical Library are sponsoring afternoon writing retreats for faculty and trainees. These retreats, offered the third Thursday of every month from 12 to 4 pm in the Research Medical Library conference room (FCT21.6040), allow 4 hours of protected time for researchers to work on their grants and manuscripts. A scientific editor is present the entire time to answer questions, offer advice, and provide consultations on early drafts. (A separate room is available for lengthy consultations.) A librarian is also present to help with literature searches, reference formatting, EndNote issues, etc. *Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.*

May 16, 2019

June 20, 2019

July 18, 2019

Writing Persuasive R01 Proposals. This grant-writing workshop for clinical and basic science research faculty at MD Anderson focuses on the content, organization, and structure of an R01 grant application. Taught by senior editors in the Department of Scientific Publications, this 1-day workshop includes lecture, discussion, and guided grant outlining and development.

Locations and times to be announced. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications. Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

May 16, 2019

Writing Scientific Articles (WSA): A Workshop for Faculty. WSA is a structured, practical, in-depth writing-education program for clinical and basic science research faculty at MD Anderson taught by the Department of Scientific Publications. This 1-day, 8-contact-hour course provides an excellent opportunity to advance your skills in writing research articles with focus and clarity.

Locations and times to be announced. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications. Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

June 13, 2019

Scientific Publications Now Charging No-Show Fees. Scientific Publications' popular full-day courses—Writing and Publishing Scientific Articles, Writing Scientific Articles, and Writing Persuasive R01 Proposals—are available to MD Anderson faculty and trainees free of charge. For many courses, we have more applicants than spaces available; and sometimes those accepted do not show up for the courses. Therefore, to ensure that as many faculty and trainees as possible can participate in our courses, we implemented a new cancellation/no-show policy. Registrants are able to drop a course without penalty until a specified date and time (typically 2 work days before the course begins), but those who do not withdraw from the course by that deadline and who do not show up for the course will be charged $95 to the chart string provided at the time of registration.

Webinars Presented by the Department of Scientific Publications. The Department of Scientific Publications continues to host a series of webinars on various topics. Dates and times, as well as links to upcoming webinars, will be posted as they become available on the [Department of Scientific Publications](#) website and in the department's "Educational Events" newsletter.

- **Designing an Effective Scientific Poster – May 15, 2019, 11:00 am – 11:30 am**

  In this webinar, Ann Sutton, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, will cover the basics of designing scientific posters. To join the webinar, click [here](#) at the appointed time and log in as a guest.

- **NIH Resources for Applicants – July 17, 2019, 11:00 am – 11:30 am**

  In this webinar, Stephanie Deming, a senior scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, will review various NIH resources you can use to help develop a strong grant application. To join the webinar, click [here](#) at the appointed time and log in as a guest.

The following webinars have already been presented and recorded:

- **Writing an Effective Narrative Review** (presented March 7, 2019)

  In this webinar, Sarah Bronson, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, offers guidance on writing a review article with a defined purpose and scope. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Techniques for Preparing an Efficient, Effective Grant Proposal** (presented January 16, 2019)

  In this webinar, Don Norwood, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, discusses some strategies for compiling an appealing, easily accessible NIH grant proposal. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Comma Basics** (presented November 7, 2018)

  In this webinar, Bryan Tutt, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, offers some general guidelines for using commas properly and reviews some examples of correct and incorrect comma use. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Essential Steps in Scientific Publishing: Services for MD Anderson Authors** (presented September 12, 2018)

  In this webinar, Laurissa Gann, a manager in the Research Medical Library, and Joe Munch, a senior scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, discuss how the Research Medical Library and Scientific Publications can help authors achieve some essential steps in preparing, submitting, and revising a manuscript for publication in a biomedical journal. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Writing Clinical Case Reports** (presented July 19, 2018)

  In this webinar, Amy Ninetto, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, discusses the essentials of writing an informative case report for publication. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Navigating the Peer Review Process** (presented May 23, 2018)

  In this webinar, Erica Goodoff, a senior scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, talks to Dr. Shine Chang, a professor in the Department of Epidemiology and the director of the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program, about navigating the peer review process used by biomedical journals. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Choosing a Journal** (presented March 20, 2018)

  In this webinar, Stephanie Deming, a senior scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, discusses strategies for selecting a journal and avoiding disreputable journals. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Creating Effective Graphs** (presented January 31, 2018)

  In this webinar, Sunita Patterson, a senior scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, reviews the fundamentals of good graph design and data presentation. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

- **Addressing ESL Issues in Scientific Writing** (presented November 9, 2017)

  In this webinar, Mark Picus, PhD, training specialist, and Ann Sutton, scientific editor, both in the Department of Scientific Publications, discuss some of the challenges in scientific writing that scientists who trained at institutions outside the United States are likely to encounter as they transition to working at a U.S.-based institution. A recording of the webinar is available.

- **Avoiding Wordiness** (presented October 4, 2017)

  In this webinar, Don Norwood, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, explains how to identify wordiness—the use of too many words to express an idea—and shares strategies for eliminating it from scientific writing. A recording of the webinar is available.

- **Ask the Editors** (presented July 26, 2017)

  In this webinar, two editors in the Department of Scientific Publications field questions about writing, editing, and publishing. A recording of the webinar is available.

- **Avoiding Plagiarism and Self-Plagiarism** (presented April 19, 2017)

  In this webinar, two scientific editors in the Department of Scientific Publications discuss the pitfalls of plagiarism, how plagiarism is detected, and how authors can avoid plagiarizing. The concept of "self-plagiarism" is also discussed. A recording of the webinar and the webinar slides are available.

- **Creating Effective Tables** (presented January 19, 2017)

  In this webinar, Joe Munch, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, discusses when to use a table, the elements of a table, some basic principles of effective table design, and how to use Microsoft Word to design a clear and useful table. A recording of the webinar and the webinar slides are available.

Grant Writing Advice. The Department of Scientific Publications now offers grant writing suggestions (Writing R01 Grant Proposals) in the Writing Advice section of our website. This information, stemming from the Grant Writers' Seminars and Workshops (developed by Drs. Stephen Russell and David Morrison and presented annually at MD Anderson) and from the NIH's SF424 (R&R) Application Guide, focuses on R01 grants but can be applied to other types of NIH grants as well.

Writing the Specific Aims Section of a Grant Application. In this video, Sunita Patterson, senior scientific editor, presents a summary of the National Institutes of Health's grant review process and how it affects the grant proposal, an overview of the structure of an R01 grant proposal, and a model for writing the Specific Aims section. The video is available on the Scientific Publications website.

Writing Abstracts Online Tutorial. Writing Abstracts, an interactive, Web-based tutorial, covers the most important aspects of writing good abstracts. The lesson includes many examples and an optional self-assessment.

Improve Your Chances for IRG Funding. This [PDF presentation](#) by Walter Pagel, the former Director of the Department of Scientific Publications, guides researchers through the process of applying for institutional research grants.

Anatomy of a Research Article Video Presentation. In this [video](#), Stephanie Deming, senior scientific editor, presents advice on writing the parts of a research article: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, title, and abstract. The [slides shown in the presentation](#) and the [presentation handout](#) can be downloaded as well.

Classes, Workshops, and Webinars Presented by the Research Medical Library. More classes, workshops, and webinars will be posted on the [Research Medical Library](#) website once they have been finalized.

Classes and workshops are located in the Research Medical Library classroom in the Pickens Academic Tower (in either FCT21.6008 or FCT21.6040). Details: Laurissa Gann (lgann@mdanderson.org), 713-794-1111.

> **May 7,** 10:00 am, class: Library Essentials for Administrative Staff
>
> **May 23,** 10:00 am, class: EndNote: Basics
>
> **May 30,** 10:00 am, class: EndNote: Advanced Tips
>
> **June 4,** 10:00 am, class: EndNote: Basics
>
> **June 7,** 10:30 am, class: Introduction to Systematic Reviews
>
> **June 21,** 10:00 am, workshop: Literature Searching
>
> **June 26,** 10:00 am, class: PubMed: The Basics
>
> **July 12,** 10:00 am, class: Introduction to Systematic Reviews
>
> **July 16,** 10:00 am, class: Library Essentials for Administrative Assistants
>
> **July 31,** 10:00 am, class: EndNote: Basics
>
> **August 2,** 10:00 am, workshop: Literature Searching
>
> **August 8,** 1:00 pm, class: Introduction to Systematic Reviews
>
> **August 20,** 10:00 am, class: EndNote: Basics

To register for a Research Medical Library webinar or class, please visit the library's [Education & Events Calendar](#).