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BOBLME contract: CST-RAPARD 335/9/2013

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BOBLME-2013-Governance-09
BOBLME – MBAI
Scientific Writing Workshop

14 to 17 October 2013
Hotel Travencore Court, Kochi, India
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1. Background

The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project has been supporting communications workshops since July 2010. Unlike earlier workshops, with applicants from the eight countries surrounding the Bay of Bengal, this course was co-sponsored and hosted by the Marine Biological Association of India. It was aimed at early-career Indian marine scientists, with the overall objectives of: building communication capacity; improving presentation skills; and increasing confidence in talking with the media. The MBAI put out a call for applicants and short-listed potential participants. Twenty (20) trainees from eight cities and 14 agencies/universities were selected on the basis of their preparedness (analysed data sets) to participate in the workshop (Appendix I).

2. Selection process

MBAI selectors targeted young scientists/researchers who have demonstrated their keen desire to develop as scientists and have been part of a programme of research that is relevant to the BOBLME Project areas of interest. Individuals who were experiencing difficulties in getting their messages across to relevant audiences, and wanted to improve their publication and presentation skills, were targeted. Candidates were drawn from a range of competent agencies such as the ICAR, fisheries research institutes, and universities with fisheries courses.

In the selection process, researchers working in coastal fisheries and/or environment were considered as highly desirable. And, the participation of women was especially encouraged.

Announcements were sent by email and post to all major institutions and universities working in marine sciences and fisheries in India. Applications were to be made by email (mail@mbai.org.in) detailing in one page (one A4 page only) with personal history, research experience and a paragraph on the research work currently engaged in.

Participants were asked to indicate briefly what data is available for preparing the manuscript. Preference was given to researchers below 35 years of age. Applications were to reach before 27th September, 2013 (extended to 30th September) and short-listed candidates were informed by email.

A total of 52 applications were received from 19 institutions in 11 locations around India; 20 were shortlisted.

3. Introduction

The workshop was held in the conference facilities of the Hotel Travencore Court, Kochi, India. Dr Chris O’Brien (Regional Coordinator, BOBLME), and Dr K. Sunil Mohamed (MBAI/CMFRI) opened the workshop and gave the participants some background to BOBLME and MBAI respectively. The workshop was designed and conducted by Dr Peter Rothlisberg (Australia) with the assistance of five
in-region mentors: Dr Sevvandi Jayakody (Sri Lanka); Dr E. Vivekananadan (India); Dr W.M.H. Kelum Wijenayeke (Sri Lanka); Dr S. Ajmal Khan (India) and Dr V. Kripa (India).

4. Objective

The objective of the workshop was to provide training to enhance effective communication of the results of participants’ research projects to the broader scientific community through refereed publications in the national and international literature.

4.1. Approach

The course was designed to be an interactive – ‘learn-by-doing’ – workshop. Each day of the 4-day workshop was divided into short lectures (25%) and practical exercises (75%) with the ultimate aim to produce a DRAFT scientific manuscript by the end of the workshop (Appendix II. Course Outline (Agenda)). Participants were paired with a peer – a ‘Buddy’ – to provide feedback on various stages of the development of their manuscript.

Further, participants were assigned to a Mentor for feedback and advice throughout the workshop (See Appendix III. Participants, Buddies & Mentors). The Student : Mentor ratio was 4:1 which allowed for a high degree of interaction.

The Workshop was very ably assisted by Ms Melna from the MBAI Secretariat and other members of Dr Sunil’s CMFRI staff.
5. Course feedback

At the completion of the course, participants were asked to fill in a Feedback Form to gauge satisfaction with and suitability of workshop elements, along with suggestions or changes to future workshops (Appendix IV. Feedback Form).

A summary of the numerical feedback received (Appendix V. Numerical Analysis) and written comments (Appendix VI. Comments) is provided. All 20 participants returned the form.

Overall the feedback was very positive. All participants either ‘Strongly agreed’ or ‘Agreed’ to most components (Appendix V. Numerical Analysis). One respondent ‘Disagreed’ with time allocation (see further comments later in report). In spite of any reservations, all respondents would recommend the course to a colleague.

Nineteen or the 20 respondents ranked the workshop elements 1 to 7, with 1 being the most valuable element (Appendix V. Numerical Analysis). One respondent (9) triplicated two rankings and was removed from the analysis. For the remaining 19, Storyboard, Outline & Journal Selection was deemed the most valuable element – seven out of 20 placed it top; five placed it second; and four placed it third; and 11 participants wanted more of this element. Introduction & Discussion and Flesh on Bones were the next most highly ranked elements and 16 participants wanted more of these two elements. Concept planning was the next most highly rated element and four participants wanted more of this element. Figures were next and then Authorship & Acknowledgement and Title & Abstract were deemed least valuable, seven respondents suggested a reduction in these elements.

Participants were also asked for written feedback. Feedback was exhaustive. A common comment was the overall need for more time for the workshop (see Appendix VI for a transcription of comments). There is always a balance about how long a workshop should be; how long participants will maintain the energy and enthusiasm; and how much work should be done before and/or after the workshop. Unlike previous workshops there was little confusion about: what to expect; what to bring; and what would be the product/outcome. Obviously the pre-workshop vetting and correspondence made for a better prepared group.

We emphasised at the workshop that a polished draft manuscript was not necessarily the expected workshop output. We expect a draft suitable for discussing with co-authors and supervisors when back at home base. The workshop draft would include all the organizational principles and elements learned at the workshop and a clear path towards publication, including time allocations for work to be done. Further, participants were given a lunchtime tutorial on Presentation Principles, in order to prepare them for the next Presentation Workshop in one month’s time.
6. Course evaluation

Participants to this workshop were extremely hard working and willing to engage individually with Buddies and Mentors. However, there was very limited feedback and constructive criticism amongst the wider group of Participants. This needs to be rectified at the next workshop by assigning specific interactive roles, rather than calling for volunteers. We also trialled small group sessions (Mentor and four Mentees) to enhance feedback across participants. The Mentors felt this was very positive.

The command of the English language was also variable. English has become the ‘universal’ language of science and would have to be the language of papers submitted to the international literature and presentations at international conferences. During the 2-minute drill’ speakers were continually counselled to slow down and try much harder to pronounce the English as carefully as possible. This will obviously be a focus at the Presentation Workshop in November.
## Appendix I  List of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Shardul S. Gangan</th>
<th>Kahar Land Research Station</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:shardul76@rediffmail.com">shardul76@rediffmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Pralaya Ranjan Behera</th>
<th>Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:beherapralaya213@gmail.com">beherapralaya213@gmail.com</a></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr L. Ranjith</th>
<th>Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ranjith_bfs@icloud.com">ranjith_bfs@icloud.com</a></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms Ranju R.</th>
<th>Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kochi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:write2ranjur@gmail.com">write2ranjur@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr A. Siva</th>
<th>Fisheries Survey India (FSI)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:sivafsi2006@gmail.com">sivafsi2006@gmail.com</a></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms Rajashree Bhoopal Sanadi</th>
<th>Fisheries Survey India (FSI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rajshanadi30@gmail.com">rajshanadi30@gmail.com</a></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr P. Karthick</th>
<th>Pondicherry University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Blair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:karthickmicrobes@gmail.com">karthickmicrobes@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Rajool Shanis C.P</th>
<th>Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kochi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rshanis@gmail.com">rshanis@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ms Sajeela K. A  
National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR)  
Kochi  
sajeelaka@gmail.com

Mr R. Mohan  
Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management (ICMAM)  
Chennai  
rethinamohan@gmail.com

Mr J. Ganesh  
Loyola College  
Chennai  
jvpganesh@gmail.com

Ms Abhijna U. G  
Kerala University Trivandrum  
abhijna_ug@yahoo.co.in

Ms Reshma Dilip Pitale  
Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)  
Maharashtra  
pitalereshma@gmail.com

Ms R. Remya  
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)  
Kochi  
remyarraj@gmail.com

Dr Mosuru Srinivasa Rao  
Andhra University  
Visakhapatnam  
sriveer_136@yahoo.co.in

Ms Anjusha A  
National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)  
Kochi  
anjusha333@gmail.com

Ms Arya P. Mohan  
National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)  
Kochi  
aryamhn@gmail.com
Dr Prajith K.K
Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT)
Kochi
prajithkk@gmail.com

Ms Laly S. J
Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT)
Kochi
laly_jawahar@yahoo.co.in

Ms Preetha G. Nair
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) - Kochi
Kochi
India
preethagnair@yahoo.in

Dr W.M.H.K. Wijenayake
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Gonawila, Makanduara
Sri Lanka
hiranya_kelum@yahoo.com

Dr Sevvandi Jayakody
James Hutton Institute
Scotland
Sevvandi.Jayakody@hutton.ac.uk

Dr E. Vivekanandan
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) – Chennai
India
evivekanandan@hotmail.com

Dr K. Sunil Mohamed
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) – Kochi
India
ksmohamed@gmail.com

Dr Chris O’Brien
Regional Coordination Unit
Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project
Phuket, Thailand
Chris.obrien@boblme.org

Dr S Ajmal Khan
Centre for Advanced Study in Marine Biology
Annamalai University
Tamil Nadu, India
seyedajmal@gmail.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Peter C. Rothlisberg</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)</td>
<td>Brisbane, Australia</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Peter.Rothlisberg@csiro.au">Peter.Rothlisberg@csiro.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr V. Kripa</td>
<td>Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) – Kochi</td>
<td>Kochi, India</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vasantkripa@gmail.com">vasantkripa@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Melna Rodrigues</td>
<td>Marine Biological Association of India (MBAI)</td>
<td>Kochi, India</td>
<td><a href="mailto:melnadensil@gmail.com">melnadensil@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II  Agenda

Scientific Writing Workshop  
Agenda

Day 1 (14 October 2013)

09:00 Set up workstations and coffee/tea

Welcome and Introduction (PR)

Concept planning and the original contribution (PR)

Individual work on Concept Plan & 2-minute drill – review by Buddy and Mentor

Lunch

2-minute drill presentations

Science of Scientific Writing (PR)

Story Board and Outlines (PR)

Individual work on Story Board and Outlines

Day 2 (15 October 2013)

Selection of Target Journal and Paper Type (PR)

Select journal

Evaluate against Critical Questions (PR)

Review Concept, Storyboard and Outlines, Journal – 5 Critical questions – Buddy & Mentor

Lunch

The Introduction (PR)

Figures – their design to enhance the narrative (PR)

Continue fleshing out Outline and start building the Manuscript with Target Journal in mind
Day 3 (16 October 2013)

Review of Outline, Introduction, Figures and Target Journal – Buddy and Mentor

Discussion and Conclusions (PR)

Start drafting Discussion and Conclusions

Lunch

Tutorial: From written papers to oral presentations (PR)

Individual work on the Manuscript

Review of Introduction and Conclusions – Buddy and Mentor

Individual work on the Manuscript

Day 4 (17 October 2013)

The Title and Abstract – the most read part of any paper (PR)

Individual work on the Title and Abstract

Review Title and Abstract – Mentor

Lunch

Authorship/Acknowledgement (PR)

Individual work on Authorship/Acknowledgements and a list of outstanding work

What to do with my paper now (PR)
  • managing the editorial process, review and revisions
  • follow up work

Individual work on the Manuscript

Review of draft Manuscript – Mentor

Revision of Manuscript

Workshop appraisal and feedback
## Appendix III  Participants, buddies & mentors

**BOBLME-MBAI Writing Workshop**

**Kochin 14 to 17 October 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Buddy</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Facilitators/Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Shardul S. Gangan</td>
<td>Mohan</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
<td>Dr Peter Rothlisberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pralaya Ranjan Behera</td>
<td>Ranjith</td>
<td>Kelum</td>
<td>Dr Sevvandi Jayakody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr L. Ranjith</td>
<td>Behera</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
<td>Dr W.M.H. Kelum Wijenayeke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ranju R.</td>
<td>Laly</td>
<td>Ajmal</td>
<td>Dr E. Vivekanandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr A. Siva</td>
<td>Rajasree</td>
<td>Kripa</td>
<td>Dr S. Ajmal Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Rajasree Bhoopal Sanadi</td>
<td>Siva</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
<td>Dr V. Kripa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr P. Karthick</td>
<td>Ganesh</td>
<td>Kelum</td>
<td>Dr Chris O’Brien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Rajool Shanis C P.</td>
<td>Sajeela</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
<td>Dr K. Sunil Mohamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Sajeela K.A.</td>
<td>Rajool</td>
<td>Ajmal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr R. Mohan</td>
<td>Shardul</td>
<td>Kripa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr J. Ganesh</td>
<td>Karthick</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Abhijna U.G.</td>
<td>Prajith</td>
<td>Kelum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Reshma Dilip Pitale</td>
<td>Shrinivasa</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms R. Remya</td>
<td>Preetha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Mosuru Srinivasa Rao</td>
<td>Reshma</td>
<td>Kripa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Anjusha A.</td>
<td>Arya</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
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<td>Ms Arya P. Mohan</td>
<td>Anjusha</td>
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<td>Dr Prajith K.K.</td>
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<td>Ms Laly S.J.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Preetha G. Nair</td>
<td>Remya</td>
<td>Kripa</td>
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</table>
Appendix IV  Course evaluation form

Scientific Writing Workshop
14 to 17 October 2013, Kochi, India

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Feedback form</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>The writing workshop was well organized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writing workshop met my expectations / needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writing workshop has assisted me in my writing skills and in the preparation of papers and articles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions and examples were clear and understandable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The format of the workshop was relevant and well organized.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The time allocation for the workshop components was appropriate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend this workshop to your colleague?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which aspect of the workshop did you find most valuable (please rate in order, with 1 being the most valuable)</td>
<td>Concept Planning and the original contribution</td>
<td>Story board, Outline and Target journal</td>
<td>Figures – their design to enhance the narrative</td>
<td>Introduction and conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Space for Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Which session would you have liked to have had more time for?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Which session would you have liked to have had less time for?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional comments or suggestions about this workshop.</td>
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Name: (Optional)..........................................................................................
Appendix V  Tabulation of workshop evaluation results

BOBLME-MBAI Scientific Writing Workshop (14 to 17 October 2013) -- Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Concept planning</th>
<th>Storyboard Outline &amp; Journal</th>
<th>Introduction &amp; Discussion</th>
<th>Flesh on bones</th>
<th>Title &amp; Abstract</th>
<th>Authorship &amp; Ack'ment</th>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
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<td>3</td>
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Mean score: 3.5  2.2  4.3  2.8  2.7  6.5  6.0

Wanted
More 4  11  3  15  1  1
Less 1  3  2  6  1
Appendix VI  Feedback comments

Participant 1. – This workshop was very interesting and informative for beginners in scientific writing like me. I procured lot of new ideas about scientific papers. I think the time period of 4 days is comparatively a short period to completely understand the basics of scientific writing. I expect suggestions from experts after completing my manuscript.

Participant 2. – The class was very informative. As a beginner we always have difficulties while writing manuscripts. The class was entertaining as well. I will appreciate if you include a session for correcting the manuscript (draft).

Participant 3. – I would like to thank Dr Sunil Mohammed for providing the wonderful opportunity to attend this workshop. This workshop is really helpful for me to improving my manuscript and bring to the wider audience. I thank Dr Peter Rothlisberg for the lecture about the manuscript preparation throughout this workshop. I must thank all the Facilitators for helping during this workshop.

Participant 4. – Workshop has been organised nicely in all the aspects starting from logistics to content of the workshop. The selection of the participants and mentors for the workshop was highly appreciable. Though fisheries or marine biological output are more way to put in the form of paper is less in many of the research and scientific community. But this type of workshop will tackle the problem. With 100% expectation eagerly waiting for the second workshop. Starting with my 2 minutes drill will some of the favorites words “Grandma”, “Punch”, “TED”, “Take home message”.

Participant 5. The workshop was very informative and gathered more tricks in the scientific writing. The duration of the workshop want [to be a] minimum [of] one week. Facility providing for printing the paper [would] also help for better time management.

Participant 6. I think this workshop is a most productive workshop ever I have attended. The instructions, guidance of mentors and coordinator will [be] helpful for writing of scientific paper in future. The two minute drill will [be] helpful for me to express and present my finding in proper way and proper place in future..

Participant 7. Fulfilled my expectations including workshop organisation and support of facilitators.

Participant 8. First of all I would like to express my gratitude to the distinguished dignitaries for giving such a wonderful workshop for me. I am very satisfied with the instruction and coaching given to me. Before coming here my knowledge concerned with scientific paper publication was shallow, even if I already submitted two papers in journals. I wish to suggest two more days more in order to get this coaching more efficient. Now I feel that I am very fortunate to be participated in this workshop.

Thank you Sir “Peter, Chris” and all of this workshop.

Participant 9. This workshop was organised very well. It included both the theory as well as practice sessions. Expert’s comments were very valuable. Interaction with mentor and buddies were very
useful for preparing and framing the manuscript in a proper manner. The mentors assigned me for assisting in writing the manuscript helped me to improve my writing skill in proper manner. Overall the above said workshop was very nice and very very useful for scientific writing paper.

Participant 10. This was an excellent workshop that I had ever attended until now. I felt as if I had got an golden opportunity to meet important intellectual personalities who were very well organised. Dr Peter sir was really a brilliant personality, he gave clear ideas on almost all parts of a scientific paper writing and was very punctual. He made us work hard and I think we could utilize the whole time in doing constructive work. Coming to my mentor, Ajmal Sir was very positive and he encouraged me to bring out the best in me, he also corrected my errors and made me realize what was essential in a manuscript. The remaining facilitators were also very helpful in giving their valuable suggestions to improve our work. I would like to thank everyone behind this great workshop. Of course the food also was very delicious.

Participant 11. A facilitator from the field of genetics may be helpful for participants from molecular genetics background. Besides the workshop was really helpful with effective tips for scientific paper writing.

Participant 12. The workshop was nicely coordinated. Totally different from normal workshop that I have attended before. It was interactive from day one itself. Self introduction was also a different style!!! This workshop helped me to know more about the preparation and submission of paper. Surely I will recommend to my friends and colleagues about this workshop.

Participant 13. Overall, the workshop was very well organised and personally I got to improve my writing skills. Maybe the time duration of workshop may be extended to 1 week, so that further interactions with our colleagues and our mentor can be done for producing a better result.

Participant 14. It was very useful for me. Developed more writing skills. From the eminent and powerful tutors we got the ideas and advices to regarding the interpretation of data, writing the paper and how to communicate our new ideas and findings to the public in an easy way.

Participant 15. The workshop enlightened to go long the way towards scientific writing of publications. Helped me lot to improve my scientific writing skills as a scientist. Offer given for ????? 35 years is highly appreciable. Yes there is the youngster struggling to achieve the target. Good selection. Thanks are due to BOBLME-MBAI and all.....Thank you.

Participant 16. This workshop gave me a clear picture about writing papers. If we have already made a draft paper based on our data, then it’s further modification based on your suggestions will be more useful and easy also time saving. Thanks a lot for the valuable suggestions, interaction and management of the workshop.

Participant 17. Ya, before coming this workshop I thought paper writing is very easy when we have results in our hand. But now I strongly learned that it has some qualities like order to frame the manuscript. Hope and promise in future (here after) I will prepare a good manuscript.
**Participant 18.** The workshop was more productive in the sense of knowledge that we acquired. Before participating in this workshop I had more confusions regarding what to take and what not to take from the literature. If possible please arrange a team to review the manuscript that were prepared during the workshop. We were grateful to BOBLME & MBAI forever for organizing this kind of wonderful workshop. Thank you all. Dr Peter, Dr Chris, Dr Sunil, Dr Kripa, Dr Ajmal Khan, Dr Vivek, Dr Kelem & Dr Sevvandi.

**Participant 19.** Pick [up] & drop [off] as well as lodging – boarding facilities are excellent. Mentor selection is really excellent. Grateful to Dr S Mohamed sir for selecting for this workshop. As well as mentor Dr Sevvandi and the other mentors and facilitators for their contribution. Hats off to the organisers and BOBLME. Very productive workshop.
Appendix VII  Participant’s handout

Report of the BOBLME scientific writing workshop

Scientific paper writing workshop

Peter Rothlisberg

14 October 2013 Kochi, India

Agenda

- Concept – Scope – Focus
- Story board & Outline
- Target journal
- Figures & Tables
- Introduction
- Discussion & Conclusion
- Title & Abstract
- Authorship & Acknowledgements
- Submission & Revision

Focus

- Literature
- Methods
- Data
- Results
- Relevance

Define the Story

- Need
- Approach
- Supporting evidence
- Evaluation
- Conclusion

Define the Story

2-minute drill – narrative
  Too long?
  Too much?
  Unfocussed?
  Did they get it?
  Who’s confused?
Content tighter & clearer – to you & listener
Early exposure – vulnerable & confronting
Example

The structure of prose

- Interpretation of information is easier if placed where the reader expects to find it
- Subject verb separation
- Locate the action with verbs
- The stress position – new information
- The topic position – old information/context
- Provide context before introducing new ideas/findings
- Emphasis follows structure – meets reader’s expectations – enhances comprehension
### Structure of a scientific paper (IMRAD)

- **Title & Keywords**
- **Authors**
- **Abstract**
- **Main text (IMRAD)**
  - Introduction
  - Materials & Methods
  - Results
  - And
  - Discussion (Conclusions)
- **Acknowledgements**
- **References**
- **Supplementary material**

### Outline

Set out sections – journal guide

Fill in sub headers

Dump content into sub headers:
- 2 to 5 dot points → paragraphs
- Consistency across sections

Drop in mini-references and other prompts

3 to 6 pages – keep building

### Roadmap – Story Board

### Target journal

1. Type of paper: journal article; a review paper; a letter; short communication
2. Geographic and scientific scope/impact
3. Who is your readership?
4. Who are you citing – peers & competitors?
5. Where are they publishing?
6. Make a short list of journals
7. Check their impact rating
8. Style guide/template from the journal’s homepage

### Impact factors

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Critical Questions

1. Is the paper a self-contained narrative? (a story with the appropriate level of complexity)
2. Is the original contribution clear?
3. Does the paper build on previous key work?
4. Have the current trends in this field been identified and contrasted?
5. Is the target journal and paper type a good choice?

Figures, tables and captions

Figure & Tables enhance narrative
Reduce the number of figures and tables – move extra to appendices or data repositories
Table or figure – not both
Colour does not always enhance clarity, cost?
Text, captions, axes and legends must be clear & consistent
A word on publication vs. presentation

Figures – Publication vs. Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Audience – narrow</td>
<td>Audience – broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Listen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraphs</td>
<td>Words or phrases (dot points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time – lots (hours)</td>
<td>Time – little (seconds - minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance – arm’s length</td>
<td>Distance – short to vast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detail [ ← ]</td>
<td>Broad brush [ → ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tables &amp; Figures</td>
<td>Illustrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>Importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td>Take home message</td>
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</table>

"Figure 1 shows…"
"I realise you can’t read this…"

Introduction/Background

Grabbing statement – First sentence, paragraph – importance / need / scope
State of play – previous work, current work (paradigms, algorithms), gaps, incorrect or inadequate interpretations or conclusions
Scope – geographic, taxonomic, disciplinary, methodology, empirical, modelling
Contribution of this paper – "This paper proposes a new relationship……"
No surprise ending – save it for your novel!
Structure of a Discussion

Not just a reiteration of Results
Strong concise statement of main findings
How is this advancing knowledge in your discipline?
How does your study compare with other studies?
How can you synthesize these findings?
- e.g. a conceptual model, relationship amongst facts -
Strong concluding paragraph
What is the significance of your study? – limitations, implications, & applications.
Be careful

Title

A label, not a sentence
Rarely too short, often too long
Use specific, familiar, short words
Avoid abbreviations & acronyms
Too clever?
Avoid series (e.g. I, II, III, IV)

Keywords

Titles & Keywords are indexed by computer
Title & Keywords are different – don’t duplicate
- Prawn + shrimp
- Cyanobacteria + blue-green algae
- Nutrients + N, P, Si
- Stable isotopes + δN, δC
- Pigment + Chlorophyll a, HPLC

Abstract

Two kinds of Abstracts: informational & indicative
Must “grab” the reader in the first sentence
Give a complete & concise summary
Include reason/importance, findings, implications, take home message
Seek an independent review of your Abstract by a non-specialist – may increase your citations

Authorship/acknowledgement

Authorship
- ‘Significant contribution’ to: original thinking; design; analysis; interpretation; and writing
- Inclusion & order of authorship – on the basis of ‘importance’ to research outcome
- Co-authorship – best to be pre-agreed
↑ Bridge from Acknowledgements ↑
Acknowledgements
- Supervised technical work
- Advice
- Unpublished data offered by third parties
- Reviewers (known and unknown)
- Funding source

Flesh on the bones

Journal instructions & Style guides
Leave the outline in place
Delete unnecessary words and paragraphs
see Robert Day’s Appendix 2 – Words & expressions to avoid
Don’t get hung up on questions or clarifications – leave questions or notes for later
Keep track of added/deleted Figures, Tables & References
Focused writing sessions (days) – divert your
## Flesh on bones (2)

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<td>Schedule blocks of time (2 to 3 h) to finish each item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leave routine work (e.g., figure improvements and reference formatting) for the smaller time slots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set a deadline and stick to it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use an editor to assist with the grammatical and narrative improvements</td>
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## Suggested manuscript length – 25 to 30 ms pp.

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<th>Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1.5 to 2 pages (double-spaced, 12pt)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2 to 4 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>10 to 12 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>1 to 2 pages</td>
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### Six deadly sins

1. Multiple submissions
2. Redundant publications
3. Plagiarism
4. Data fabrication and falsification
5. Improper use of human subjects and animals in research
6. Improper author contribution

## Cover letter

**Basic information should be:**
- Editor name(s)
- Originality of submission – sole submission
- No competing interests – no prior publication or financial ties
- Suggest 3 to 6 potential reviewers (referees)
- Corresponding author

## Reasons for rejection – Content

- Limited interest or covers local issues only
- Routine application of well-known methods
- A minor advance or is limited in scope – "Salami" papers: datasets too small to be meaningful
- Novelty and significance are not immediately evident or sufficiently well-justified
- Out of date
- Duplication of previously published work
- Incorrect/unacceptable conclusions

## Reasons for rejection – Preparation

- Failure to meet submission requirements
- Incomplete coverage of literature
- Unacceptably poor English

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*Suggested manuscript length – 25 to 30 ms pp.*

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*Reasons for rejection – Preparation*

- Failure to meet submission requirements
- Incomplete coverage of literature
- Unacceptably poor English
Manage the review and revision process

Your manuscript is likely to get four or more reviews.
Consider using internal reviews (total or partial)
Follow the internal and journal process instructions strictly
Suitability of journal – seek advice, write to journal
Suggested reviewers – select carefully & pre-warn
In replying to reviewers’ comments:
  Follow the editors instructions
  Constructive criticism is valuable (feedback from experts)
  Be polite, not argumentative – if they’re confused it’s your fault!
  Provide a response sheet addressing each item of feedback

Marketing your product / self

The publication is just the beginning
Get out and talk about it
  Conferences
  Workshops
  Seminars
  Lab visits
  Press releases and interviews
Send it to others in your field
Reference it in your next publication

Final comments

Define the message
Pick the messenger
Share the quest with peers
Learn from the setbacks
Share the message & build a network
Establish your legitimacy
Finally, celebrate your achievements

Additional reading

ISBN: 0 643 06799 X (pbk)

ISBN: 0 313 33040 9 (pbk)


ISBN: 9780643100466 (pbk)
Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are working together through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and to lay the foundations for a coordinated programme of action designed to improve the lives of the coastal populations through improved regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the implementing agency for the BOBLME Project.

The Project is funded principally by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the FAO, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the USA.

For more information, please visit www.boblme.org