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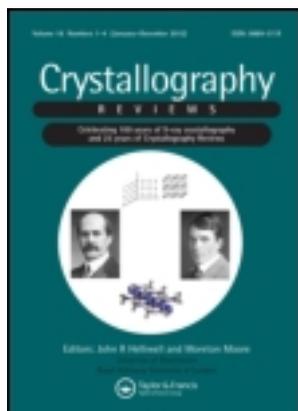
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Writing science: how to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded

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I warmly recommend Jenkin's book to everyone interested in the emergence of science in its ambient social fabric. It is a captivating record of the intense collaboration of two great personalities, father and son, interacting with love and respect. It is also a spirited defence of Lawrence's achievements and merits against his detractors and critics. It is a very thorough work that takes some time and effort to read. But the time is well spent and the effort is rewarding.

Reference

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Writing science: how to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded, by Joshua Schimel, Oxford University Press, Inc., New York, 2012, 221 pp., US\$35.00 (paperback), ISBN 9780199760244

Writing science is more than telling people about research results: it is telling stories about how science works. This book is extremely comprehensive and insightful. The structure of each chapter is concise and engaging and Professor Joshua Schimel changes our basic perception of the importance of communicating science.

This book deals with science-story structure and offers an outstanding framework for writing successful scientific papers and proposals. The aim of this book is to 'show scientists and students how to present their research in a way which is clear and that will maximize reader comprehension'. The author gives in fact an exhaustive overview of the strategies and effective approaches to write successful scientific texts and reports. He also treats some of the most common weaknesses and problems that are present in scientific papers and proposals, explaining how they could be improved.

The volume has 21 chapters and 2 appendices. After a clear and concise introductory chapter, the first half of the book concentrates on the structure of the scientific story, giving emphasis to the importance of the story-telling aspect of writing. The second section of the book deals with the internal structure of the article; and how to write a clear and coherent paper. The final section targets some specific topics, such as writing for the public. *Writing science* is just the right title reflecting the contents of this book.

Descriptive explanations are complemented with many examples that help readers to analyse their scientific writing and to think about the importance of writing. Most of the chapters end up with some suggested practical exercises that lead the researchers throughout the book, and building up their writing skills.

Schimel's book changes our fundamental perception of the importance of communicating science. As he states, 'the papers that get cited the most and the proposals that get funded are those that tell the most compelling stories'. Therefore, the craft of writing is something that any enthusiastic researcher should want to pursue and eventually to reach.

Writing Science is highly recommended reading not only for graduate students and post-doctoral researchers, but also for those scientists that are not confident in their writing and who

want to improve their scientific story-telling. Although this book is specially focussed on the writing of articles and proposals, the principles given comprise a solid reference for any scientific text writing (reviews, papers, theses, reports ...) as well as presentations.

Based on my own personal experience in both scientific communication and funding proposals, it turns out that to achieve papers which will be well cited, they must possess novelty and present results at the frontiers of science. These must be effective and successfully reflected in the title. Therefore, to have a good guide of style becomes 'a must' to improve the attractiveness in scientific communication, provided that it is based upon high-quality science.

Concerning proposals for funding, this book provides some interesting hints to connect the scientific projects to referees and funding committees, which definitively represents a high percentage of funding success. Reading *Writing Science* should also allow postgraduate students and young scientists to improve their skills quickly, gaining from the experience of one senior scientist who has been concerned with the importance of making scientific communication aesthetic and appealing.

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Explaining research: how to reach key audiences to advance your work, by Dennis Meredith, New York, Oxford University Press, 2010, 376 pp., \$35.00 (paperback), ISBN13: 9780199732050, ISBN10: 0199732051

Explaining Research – How to Reach Key Audiences to Advance Your Work, by Dennis Meredith, is a comprehensive guide to a wide range of communication techniques that a scientist needs to disseminate her or his results to a vast variety of audiences.

This book is addressed to practising researchers, essentially scientists and engineers, and its aim is to illustrate all the tools and techniques available nowadays to communicate science. As the author points out in the Preface, there is a 'critical knowledge gap that greatly hinders research communication' and researchers are rarely able to share their results with audiences beyond their peers in a plain, clear and effective way. Enhancing the share of knowledge between scientists and lay-level audiences is surely a very important issue since it would be the basis for a scientific cultural growth of the contemporary society that could encompass not only managing high-tech applications, but also basic science and subjects such as evolution theory, global climate changes, ecology, energy, that have a profound influence on society. Dennis Meredith is successful in addressing these aims with a broad vision.

This book can be read with two perspectives in mind: one is a close-up, literal, approach, by paying attention to the gold mine of tips, suggestions, advices on how to explain, present, disseminate one's results to many diversified audiences; the second view is more panoramic, as this book offers a big fresco of how science is perceived by and integrated into society, and of which underlying mechanisms rule the relations, communications and mutual consideration between researchers and the institutions, legislators, corporate sponsors, donors, funding agencies, and broadly the civil world, including the lay-level general public.

A large proportion of scientists would be conscious and focused just on the first approach, and are probably confident that they are pretty good at illustrating their results in conferences or at teaching and lecturing, and that the whole story terminates there. This book is so rich in material