

8-10 July 2009
Perth Venue TBC



Centre for
Sustainable
Resource
Processing

writing **clear** science

The Centre for Sustainable Resource Processing is sponsoring a writing workshop for researchers

- **Postgraduate students 3-day workshop Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8-10 July; registration \$895 (includes GST) – Student Support Fund available for CSRP students**
- **Professional researchers 2-day workshop Wednesday and Thursday 8 and 9 July; registration \$695 (includes GST) – \$595 for CSRP affiliates**

This course is aimed at science professionals and postgraduate students with different types of writing experience. The course is not specifically designed for beginners or advanced writers, but at participants with scientific backgrounds interested in improving writing skills. The workshops include the “process of writing” from getting the idea down on paper to structuring the first draft to completing the final draft. How to tailor your report towards different audiences and for different purposes will be covered. The course will cover essential elements report writing entrenched in scientific method (e.g., introduction, methods, results and discussion).

Day 1 The Nuts & Bolts: Writing Clearly & Succinctly

Lectures: Writing Strategies & Techniques; Writing Style & Word Choice; Sentence and Paragraph Structure.

Writing Exercises: Summarising Skills; Writing Science in plain English; Title, Sentence and Paragraph Construction.

Day 2 - Writing Reports & Manuscripts

Lectures: Writing Techniques; Clear Structure for Excellent Writing; Accurate Science Writing. Writing Science in Plain English.

Writing Exercises: Assessment of Writing Examples; Report Construction and Continuity; Improvement of Writing Style.

Day 3 - Writing Your Thesis (Postgrad Course only)

Lectures: Designing & Writing Your Thesis; Researching Your Topic; Thesis Structure.

About the Presenter: Dr Marina Hurley, founder and manager of Writing Clear Science, is a scientist and member of Australian Scientific Communicators, ANZAAS, the Australian Ecological Society, and the Victorian Writers Centre. She has an exceptionally clear understanding of the process involved in report and thesis writing and has developed her unique approach to teaching science writing into the Writing Clear Science Courses. [Writing Clear Science website at www.writingclearscience.com.au]

Spaces are limited to 12 participants, so reserve your place today.

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More details at the CSRP website at www.csrp.com.au

Workshop Plan

Lecture, exercise & discussion topics

Day 1: Nuts & Bolts of Writing: Writing clearly & succinctly

1. Introduction

- Elements essential to high quality science writing
- Common writing problems & obstacles

Exercise ~ How do you write?

- The writing process
- Writing strategies & techniques

2. Sentence & paragraph structure

- Determine your main message

Exercise ~ Main message

- Sentence structure

Exercise ~ Breaking up long sentences

- Sentence punctuation

Exercise ~ Punctuation

- Linking sentences
- Paragraph structure

Exercise ~ Topic sentence

3. Writing style & word choice

- Using appropriate language, terminology
- Avoiding 'baggage'
- Removing repetitiveness and redundancies

Exercise ~ Succinct Writing

- Developing & using terminology

Day 2: Writing Reports & Peer-Review Papers

4. Clarifying your research problem

- Identify your audience

Exercise ~ Identifying your audience & your purpose

- Understand the behaviour of your reader

Exercise ~ Reading critique

- Establish context
- Develop good summarising skills
- Explain your topic: what's your problem?

Exercise ~ Tell a story

5. Clear Structure for excellent writing

- Develop sound document structure
- Review of essential science reporting (IMRD): Introduction, Methods, Results & Discussion
- Publishing your science (overview)

Exercise & Discussion ~ Review of report & paper structure

Day 3: Writing Your Thesis

1. Designing and writing your thesis

- Your title, statement of the research problem and aim
- Time lines, management plans & risk assessment

2. Thesis construction and chapter structure

- Designing your structure according to project and discipline

Discussion ~ Project design overview

Writing Clear Science workshops

FAQ: Who are these workshops aimed at?

The writing workshops are designed to assist both science professionals and students. People from all science backgrounds and with different types of writing experience are encouraged to attend. Those who attend are expected to have had some formal science training. We emphasise that science writing should be accurate, clear, direct and succinct.

The workshops are designed and facilitated by Dr Marina Hurley. Drawing on her experience as a writer, lecturer, research scientist, peer reviewer and workshop facilitator, Dr Hurley has developed a unique and comprehensive approach to the teaching of science writing that participants find inspiring.

What do the workshops cover?

These workshops contain both practical and theoretical instruction. The writing workshops include short lectures, writing exercises, group discussions and editing review exercises. Participants get the opportunity to improve their own writing by rewriting sentences and paragraphs, and by reviewing their own writing and that of other participants.

We teach how to manage the entire process of writing, from how to 'get your thoughts down on paper' and structure your first draft, to producing the final draft. On the first day we cover how to start, what to write, how to structure your sentences and paragraphs, and how to improve your writing style. On the second day we talk about designing your document for different audiences and different purposes. We review the standard scientific reporting framework and discuss how it can be tailored to the needs of both the writer and their audience.

What don't the workshops cover?

1. *We don't teach writing for a specific field of science.* We present science writing from a broad perspective, so that people from all walks of scientific life can attend and learn from each other.
2. *We don't teach a particular type of report writing.* We review the essential elements of report writing that are entrenched in the scientific method (IMRD): Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. From this basic template we discuss how to design different types of reports according to the needs of the writer and their audience.
3. *We don't teach the rules of grammar.* The rules of English grammar are extensive and comprehensive and out of the scope of these workshops. We teach sentence structure by focusing on the difference between independent and dependent clauses. These aspects are then used to review the basic rules of correct punctuation. We provide additional resources for those people who require grammar tuition.

4. *We do not allocate large blocks of time to writing new material.* In these workshops writing practice involves rewriting and reviewing existing material: example sentences and paragraphs and work submitted by participants prior to the workshop.

Are these workshops designed for beginners or for advanced writers?

These workshops provide a solid framework for people to improve both their writing and research skills. They are not specifically designed for beginners or advanced writers. The workshops are designed to be flexible in order to meet the different needs of people who want to improve their writing. More experienced writers can gain important insights about writing from different perspectives. Some experienced writers may view the workshop as a refresher and an opportunity to comprehensively improve their writing skills. Less experienced writers can use the skills gained from this workshop to help them approach their writing in a logical and confident manner.

These workshops are designed to facilitate learning in an interactive environment. Different people have different types of writing challenges. Many people are productive writers but still struggle with a range of different writing problems:

- difficulty with writing down their thoughts
- punctuation
- getting their point across
- writing succinctly
- structuring their documents
- writing clear paragraphs
- knowing what writing rules to follow and what rules to ignore

Some people have experience writing highly technical papers for peer-reviewed journals but have difficulty writing clearly. Similarly there are many people who frequently write short reports and internal reports but find publishing a paper a daunting prospect. In addition there are some people who have decades of experience conducting research but still have difficulty writing their research for other scientists outside of their field. Overall we aim to assist people to improve their productivity and to be able to write for a wider audience.

Can I just enrol for Day 2?

No, as this is a concurrent two day course. The facilitator's overall approach and the factors imperative to excellent writing are comprehensively covered in the introduction session on the morning of first day. These fundamentals are then continually repeated throughout the workshop. Some of the information and exercises offered during Day 1 or Day 2 may be similar to what an experienced writer has already absorbed in training or in practice. However, to ensure a smooth workshop environment, irrespective of the participants' level of experience, we need everyone to start at the same point and with the same level of understanding.