

SAGES,

Thank you for sponsoring me to attend the Geoverbund course on scientific writing skills in Cologne, Germany. The course was instructed by Dr. Markus Flury, the current editor of the Vadose Zone Journal and previous associate editor of high profile journals such as Water Resources. His insight into the process post submission into publishing a scientific article was interesting and extremely beneficial to understand the editorial and review process in more detail. The core of the course centered on a few key principles: write to help the reader understand, write to keep the reader engaged, write as a story, write simply, and strive for clarity. Clarity, a key aspect Dr. Flury continually focused on in writing a scientific paper. Clarity was broken down into 4 main areas: clear sentences, cohesion, coherence, and concision. These are meant to be applied throughout the writing process. As we talked through the process of developing an appropriate Title, Abstract and Introduction, a key point was to know which journal the submission should be made. As a class, we went through many examples and then rewrote and rewrote each section until the message was clear. The next section of the course dealt with authorship. We had multiple discussions on articles that were presented by students in the course about contribution, who receives authorship and how it should be ordered. Corallie and I presented on "Credit where credit is due" by



Allen et al., 2014. The answer resulted in a question; Would the paper be the same without the involvement of that author?

The course continued with discussion concerning what should go into a materials and methods sections, and the tense of the verbage. We also discussed passive versus active voice throughout the paper. The main points from the 'results & discussion' section were to avoid redundancy, avoid verbosity, and how to emphasize the 'so what?' of the findings. What is actually significant? What are the final implications of the work? We had a comprehensive workshop of tables, figures and photographs of

what to do and what not to do. We edited many examples as a class. Finally, we discussed research ethics that need to be taken into consideration throughout the scientific process. Overall, it was a very informative course, and extremely beneficial at this early stage of my PhD. There were many practical methods and suggestions I can utilize as I am beginning to write my first publication and I am grateful for this expanded learning opportunity.



Outside of the course, Corallie and I ventured around Cologne in our evenings. We toured the Cologne Cathedral, built in 1258 and walked along the Rhein. I also visited the Roman German museum which has evidence of human settlements in Cologne from 35,000 years ago. We enjoyed traditional wiener schnitzel and German bier in the large parks around the University. I can't thank you enough for sponsoring this opportunity.

Allen, L., A. Brand, J. Scott, M. Altman. M. Hlava. 2014. Credit where credit is due. Nature. Vol 508. 312.