

Inspirational Writing for Academic Publication

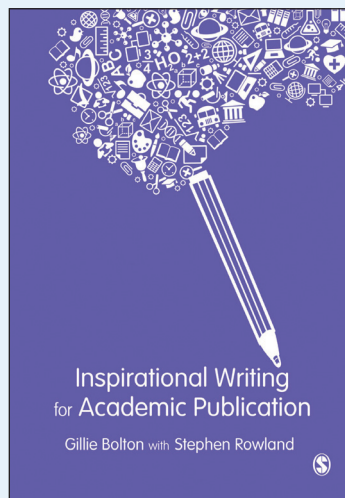
Gillie Bolton, Stephen Rowland
Sage Publications Ltd 2014
Price £19.99. Pp 184
ISBN 978 1 4462 8237 3

Mediocre writing in scientific publications is an almost immediate turn-off for readers, reviewers and editors alike. Yet rarely are good writing skills formally taught as part of a scientific or clinical education, which is what this modest book endeavours to address.

The work is presented in the first person by the principal author (Bolton), with the other (Rowland) ‘chipping in’ with reflections on the guidance based on his experience. They expound a three-phased approach to writing: initial exploration to allow authors to develop their ideas in an unconstrained fashion, redrafting to enhance communication with readers, then editing to ensure clarity and accuracy. Chapters commence with

quotes from four fictional academics, created to voice the perspectives of novice writers. The book is interspersed with practice exercises and backed up with key references for further reading.

Passages in here will resonate with most, if not all, would-be authors. I found the guidance on creating the right environment for writing, asking how and why your manuscript could create significant change, and use of metaphor particularly pertinent. Similarly the sections on providing critical feedback, narrative writing and determining authorship are valuable. For readers expecting a primer on manuscript structure or grammar, these are relegated to the very end, consistent with the authors’ theory of writing.



This book is accessible, but I suspect will not be to everyone’s taste. While the approach is innovative, in places it reads more like a self-help book, introducing concepts such as the ‘internal terrorist’ and ‘internal mentor’. Those looking for a rigorous discourse on linguistics will need to search elsewhere. However, its goal is to facilitate the scientist struggling to publish effectively to break through common barriers and avoid pitfalls, and this it certainly achieves. My advice would be to browse this volume – if its style suits you as a reader, it will be an excellent place to start.

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ing complaint, encompassing important examination findings and appropriate investigations to enable diagnoses to be made and thereafter commence appropriate treatment plans. Each clinical problem is further summarized into an algorithm to facilitate appropriate decision making. Clinicians are used to seeing algorithms for acute scenarios but this book goes further in developing them for outpatient scenarios and this is the real strength of the book.

Doctors in training should find the book particularly useful to translate their theoretical knowledge into practice, especially in clinic. It may also assist in preparation for the part 2 MRCOG exam by providing a sound foundation of clinical problems, around which they can add additional information from the suggested reading sources as well as other sources.

Hospital departments should also find the book useful in the various clinical areas to assist doctors in training but also when approaching the development of guidelines as, too often, these guidelines are very descriptive but not laid out to facilitate easy decision making and management.
Michael Ellard, Wirral University Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Merseyside

Thoracic Imaging: Illustrated Clinical Cases (2nd edn)

Sue Copley, David M Hansell,
Jeffrey P Kanne
CRC Press 2014
Price £24.99. Pp 212
ISBN 9781482231151

This book, aimed at clinicians at all stages of their career, contains a collection of both common and more esoteric thoracic images. Diagnoses range from the straightforward (e.g. pneumonectomy) to complicated (e.g. necrotizing granulomatous vasculitis) as do the imaging modalities presented. Respiratory trainees and radiology trainees would likely benefit most from using this book, particularly before specialist examinations.

The book contains 100 questions, some single and some multipart, and all focusing around an image or images. Images range from chest X-rays to PET scans (positron emission tomography) to MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). Questions focus on differential diagnoses to management of conditions and further investigations. They are all open ended and provoke thought and discussion. As such the book lends itself to being used for group work. Images and diseases are in a random order with

answers following on immediately after the questions.

The references section at the back of the book provides a comprehensive resource list for further reading. This book is by no means exhaustive in terms of the information provided, but it is a valuable tool with a good range of images.

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Algorithms for Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Edited by Sambit Mukhopadhyay,
Edward Morris, Sabaratnam Arulkumaran
Oxford University Press 2014
Price £29.99. Pp 336
ISBN 978 0 19 965139 9

This new publication has been contributed to by practicing consultants. It gives clear and well-laid out succinct information on over eighty conditions covering the whole of obstetrics and gynaecology. It is divided into four sections, dealing not only with acute conditions in both areas of the specialty, but also with common conditions seen in the outpatient setting.

This book focuses on clinical problems rather than actual pathologies and has a structured approach, guiding the reader through the management of the present-