Interactive comment on "Improving together: better science writing through peer learning" by M. A. Stiller-Reeve et al.

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GENERAL COMMENTS: Although this is not a conventional research paper, the topic of effective communication (writing, in particular) is essential to success in any scientific field. I think this paper serves two important functions: 1) Providing an introduction to the research-based evidence that exists about effective writing, and 2) Presenting a method for creating and sustaining a peer-facilitated writing group for early career scientists. I do think this paper could be strengthened by the inclusion of metrics for the effects the writing groups had on the participants, so perhaps developing such an assessment could be a future research goal for the authors?

SPECIFIC COMMENTS: In no particular order, here are a few additional thoughts: - In lieu of a formal assessment, are there other data that could be used to support the

claim that these writing groups are beneficial? I'm thinking of things like acceptance rates of papers, grants awarded, or similar metrics for the participants during the time they were involved in these groups. I realize that the timeframe (since 2012) makes this difficult, but even a few qualitative examples could be useful. - I like the explicit detail provided about the writing process and the accompanying figure. I was wondering if only one member of the group is working on a piece at a time? Also, how long are these meetings? With 20 people, is each one giving a few minutes of feedback or is it more of a free-for-all discussion? - Do the groups use any online co-editing software (I'm thinking of something like Google docs) to share comments or are they all hand-written on printed copies? - On page 3 line 21, you seem to imply that improving basic writing skills will automatically translate into improved scientific writing skills. I think the former is necessary, but not sufficient, for the latter. Can you be a bit more explicit about some of the skills you do/do not think are covered by this process? I'm also thinking about how skills related to creating effective blogposts do/do not relate to other types of writing required by scientists (e.g. see next point). - This is more about the concept than the paper, but have you thought about using these groups to provide peer-review for other types of writing ECS's are faced with? I'm thinking about things like grant proposals, scientific papers, abstracts for conferences, etc. This might entice ECS's who aren't committed to writing blogposts, but would engage in activities more focused on something they already have to do. - Along the same lines, for groups not comfortable with how to give feedback, I wonder if a structured rubric would be a good complement to the process depicted in Figure 2? I've been using rubrics based on the goals of the writing product in my undergraduate scientific writing class and it seems to help the students get started on first assessing the content (function) and then figuring out how the structure (form) could best support the ideas.

TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS: A few small things I noticed: - Page 2, Line 11: I think a word is missing between "communicate" and "disciplinary" - There seems to be inconsistency in whether or not the first line of a new paragraph is indented (e.g. page 6 line 22).

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