

Teaching Academic Writing in the Health Sciences: A Guide for Instructors, Mentors, and Trainers

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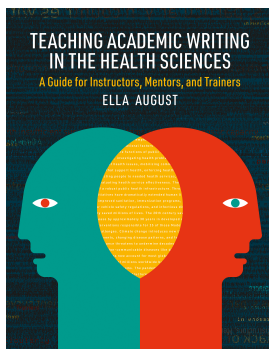
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HOW TO CITE: Ringwald B. Teaching Academic Writing in the Health Sciences: A Guide for Instructors, Mentors, and Trainers. *Fam Med*. 2026;0(0):1–2.
doi: [10.22454/FamMed.2026.0447](https://doi.org/10.22454/FamMed.2026.0447)

FIRST PUBLISHED: September 23, 2026

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Book Title: Teaching Academic Writing in the Health Sciences: A Guide for Instructors, Mentors, and Trainers

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Publication Details: University of Michigan Press, 2026, 262 pp., \$24.95 paperback

Academic writing remains one of the most persistent challenges in the health sciences. We expect learners and faculty to produce clear, rigorous scholarly work, yet few receive structured learning regarding how to write well. In *Teaching Academic Writing in the Health Sciences: A Guide for Instructors, Mentors, and Trainers*, Ella August offers a practical, accessible guide for educators who find themselves responsible for teaching writing, often without formal training in writing pedagogy. Her book arrives at an opportune time as academic medicine continues to expand expectations for scholarly productivity. Simultaneously, departments are grappling with how best to support their faculty and trainees in meeting scholarly expectations.

Ella August is well-positioned to address this gap. She is a faculty member in public health with extensive experience teaching scientific writing;^{1–4} she brings credibility grounded in years of mentoring graduate students, clinicians, and early-career faculty. Her writing reflects a deep understanding of the anxieties and barriers learners face, and the practical constraints instructors navigate when trying to teach writing in busy clinical and academic environments.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its organization. Rather than offering abstract theories of writing instruction, August structures her guidance around the real challenges educators encounter: diagnosing learners' writing needs, designing assignments that teach skills rather than simply evaluate them, and providing feedback that improves writing without overwhelming either the learner or the instructor. Each chapter includes ready-to-use lesson plans adaptable to multiple settings, including single-day courses, multiday workshops, or individual assignments embedded within existing curricula. These features make the book unusually actionable. Faculty developers, residency educators, and course directors can readily incorporate August's tools into research rotations, scholarly concentration programs, quality improvement curricula, or faculty development seminars.

August's pedagogical approach is grounded in the belief that writing is a learnable skill, not an innate talent. She emphasizes process, iteration, and confidence-building, encouraging instructors to help learners develop writing identities rather than simply produce polished products. Her guidance aligns with contemporary scholarship on writing theories⁵ and learner-centered writing instruction,⁶ but she translates these concepts into concrete strategies that clinicians can implement without needing a strong writing background.

The book is also notable for its flexibility. August provides scripts for mentoring conversations, templates for assignments, and strategies for integrating writing instruction into time-limited educational settings. These tools are particularly valuable for clinician-educators who may not see themselves as writing teachers but nonetheless supervise manuscripts, theses, or scholarly projects. The tone throughout is encouraging and accessible, making the book suitable for both new and experienced instructors.

Because the book was completed at the beginning of the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) in writing, future editions could be strengthened by discussion of

technology-enhanced writing. Many faculty developers are now navigating how to ethically incorporate AI tools into writing instruction, how to teach learners to partner with emerging technologies, and how to maintain academic integrity in an evolving landscape. August's framework is well-suited to such additions, and readers will likely welcome guidance on integrating AI in ways that support learning rather than circumvent it.

Despite this opportunity for expansion, *Teaching Academic Writing in the Health Sciences: A Guide for Instructors, Mentors, and Trainers* succeeds in its central aim: providing instructors with a clear, adaptable, and evidence-informed framework for teaching writing. It is a resource that will be used rather than shelved.

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