



Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



From the President

Happy March! For some of us, de facto spring has already arrived (possibly portending a horrific summer, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it). For others, there may be a bit more chill in the air and snow in the driveway before the flowers bloom.

But wherever you are, and whatever it's like outside, there's plenty of BELS action to be had online. We concluded last month with a webinar, "Make Your Desk Work For (Not Against) You!," presented by Carrie Thurber, PhD, ELS. Carrie, as well as the participants, provided valuable tips on ergonomics and on organizing your desk and your work. And later this month, we'll

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INSIDE:

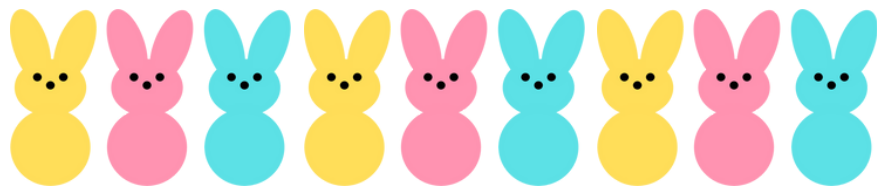
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The BELS Letter

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From the President



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have a webinar titled “Special Presentation: Fostering a Growth Mindset.” Meredith MacPherson, MLS, ELS, Senior Manager, Editorial & Design Services, Evidera (part of Thermo Fisher Scientific), will lead an interactive presentation about the growth mindset and how to cultivate one to boost your professional and personal development.

Also coming soon is a short survey on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We’ll ask questions about DEI issues you’ve encountered, what resources you have used to address them, and what resources you might still need.

*Steve Palmer, PhD, ELS
BELS President*



BELS Member Discounts Are Blooming!

Grow your resource list while saving some green! BELS has partnered with resource providers to offer valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any non-member.

BELS member discounts include a **30% discount** on a single license of PerfectIt software. PerfectIt improves consistency, ensures quality, and saves time. BELS members also receive a **20% discount** on reference books such as *Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The discount can be applied to both online and print versions of these books. Visit bels.org and click on Member Resources to claim your discounts today!



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Fostering a Growth Mindset



Special Presentation: Fostering a Growth Mindset

Thursday, March 28
5 pm CDT via Zoom

How do I go from 'I don't understand these scientific terms' to 'I don't understand these scientific terms YET'?

Join us for a special, highly interactive presentation on how to cultivate a growth mindset with our speaker, Meredith MacPherson, MLS, ELS, Senior Manager, Editorial & Design Solutions, Evidera, part of Thermo Fisher Scientific.



Register at bels.org



Plus, save the date for this upcoming members-only social event!

- **Thursday, May 23, 2024 (5:00 pm CDT):** [Music to My Ears: Finding Harmony in Work and Life](#)

Spring into the New Season with BELS!

Proudly display the BELS logo on your tote bag, mug, travel tumbler, sweatshirt, laptop case, or mouse pad. BELS merchandise items make great gifts for colleagues, employees, friends, family, and yourself! You can also ship directly to the recipient. Visit www.bels.org/store to order.



BELS Member Event Recap



At last month's virtual members-only event, "Make Your Desk Work For (Not Against) You!" we discussed both ergonomic and desk and office organization tips to improve productivity and prevent or alleviate work-related musculoskeletal disorders. Participants shared valuable suggestions and took the chance to interact with other members.

If you missed the event, the slides are available for BELS members [here](#).

Ergonomics Basics

Goal: Prevent the development of work-related musculoskeletal injuries and reduce risk factors.

Areas of Focus: Desk, Chair, Monitor, Mouse/Keyboard, Peripherals (phone)

Proper Sitting Posture/ Distances

- ✓ Shoulders relaxed
- ✓ Back support
- ✓ Arm support
- ✓ Thighs horizontal
- ✓ Feet flat on the floor

18-24"

16-20"

23-32"

Ergonomic Trends



Testimonial on the Benefits of ELS(D) Certification

The ELS(D) certification offered by the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences is proof of exceptional editorial proficiency, reflecting an editorial mastery superior to that required for the ELS certification. We bring to you, from Chris Small, MA, ELS(D), an insightful testimonial of the benefits of this certification, in the hope that it encourages all certified editors to pursue the diplomate status.

“I earned my ELS(D) certification in 2018, after earning my ELS certification in 2012. There are three ways it has helped me professionally.

1. Initially, ELS(D) represented a milestone for professional development, which was a large component of annual goal-setting at my company at the time. I worked in the regulatory CMC function at that company and coming from a background in English and economics, not life sciences, I felt this credential gave me additional credibility with my colleagues, even though I had been a science editor for 15 years at that point.
2. Next, ELS(D) was a tangible achievement and metric I could reference during job searches and interviews. In several interviews, I have mentioned that ELS(D) indicates a level of mastery as an editor and that there are only 30 to 35 diplomates worldwide. I do not say that it means I am the best editor on the market, because many more editors have that level of skill and accomplishment, but diplomates can prove it.
3. Finally, ELS(D) is simply a point of pride that I have earned the equivalent of a graduate degree in my chosen profession. I put my ELS(D) certificate on my wall next to my undergraduate and graduate diplomas, and it may be the most meaningful to me because it reflects the 25 years I have dedicated to being an editor.

I would recommend pursuing the ELS(D) certification to any editor who feels they are ready.”

For more information about this program, please visit:

<https://bels.memberclicks.net/diplomate-program>

For any other queries that are not addressed on the aforementioned page, please feel free to reach out to us using the “[Contact us](#)” form on our website.



Monthly Poll Results

In February's poll, we asked you to tell us which of the following three sentences you thought was most likely to be read wrong.

1. The session will include a full slate of hands on activities.
2. Everyone should try to reduce the stress producing situations that make demands on them.
3. The hypothesis could be tested by looking for small amplitude oscillations.

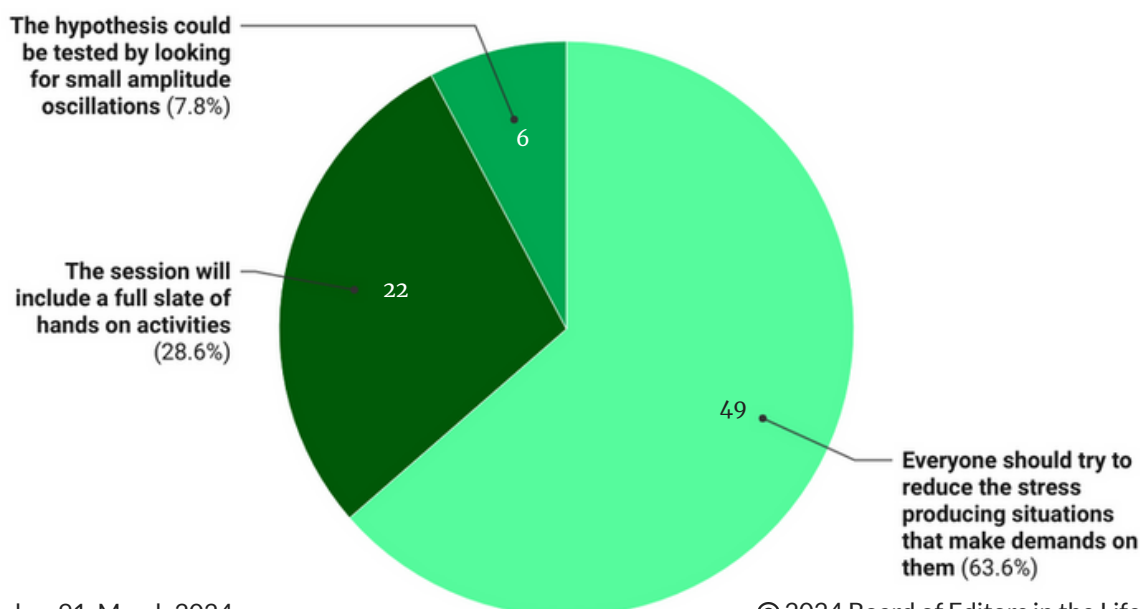
A total of 77 responses were recorded. The largest percentage of respondents (63.6%) chose "Everyone should try to reduce the stress producing...", and the smallest percentage of respondents (7.8%) chose "The hypothesis could be tested by looking..." The remaining sentence, "The session will include a full slate of hands on activities," was chosen by 28.6% of the respondents.

Although we think "The session will include..." was the most humorous choice if one imagines what a "slate of hands" might look like, less than a third of the respondents thought most readers would read this sentence incorrectly (or literally). Readers of the "winning" sentence, which began with "Everyone should try...", could mentally either place a hyphen between "stress" and "producing" or place a comma after "stress."

Visit bels.org to participate in this month's poll, which asks you to select the gene name that you like best.

Which of these do you think is most likely to be read wrong?

February 2024 BELS Poll Results



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The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Potential employers and clients of manuscript editors usually have no objective way to assess the proficiency of editors. For their part, editors are frustrated by the difficulty of demonstrating their ability. That is why both employers and editors so often resort to personal references or ad hoc tests, not always with satisfactory results. The need for an objective test of editorial skill has long been recognized.

To meet that need, BELS developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. The Board administers two examinations—one for certification and one for diplomate status. The examinations, written by senior life-science editors assisted by testing experts, focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.

