

# Lectures on scientific communication

**L**ECTURES ON SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION turn out to be a time- and cost-effective way to get messages across to potentially large groups of scientists and engineers at universities, research institutes, or technical conferences. By raising both awareness and motivation, they help attendees open themselves to change and eventually develop new skills.

Built on some 20 years of training and consulting experience, our lectures on presentations, scientific papers, and graphs have rapidly become popular with researchers worldwide—in fact, they seem to appeal equally much to grad students, postdocs, senior researchers, even distinguished professors, who often learn all the more when they are more experienced. Among others, they are much demanded at top universities and institutes in the United States, such as at MIT, Stanford, UC Berkeley, Caltech, Harvard, and UCLA, to name just a few. The three topics are at the heart of *Trees, maps, and theorems*, our own book on “effective communication for rational minds.”

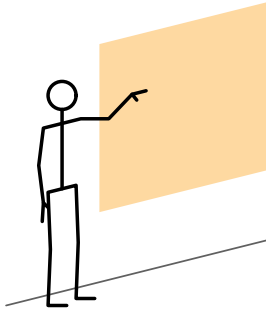
More recently, and at the request of our clients, we developed other successful lectures on communication-related themes: one on education (*Teaching is not learning*) for instructors, teaching assistants, and more; and the other on persuasion, a critical success factor in any career—and in private life, too.

Our talks are usually run in time slots of 90 to 120 minutes (120 being preferable whenever compatible with the schedule), with no limit on the number of attendees. For small groups (15 to 25 people), however, we recommend replacing the talk with an interactive workshop, then typically run in half a day.

The next pages provide details for each lecture, a short bio of the speaker, and answers to frequently asked questions.

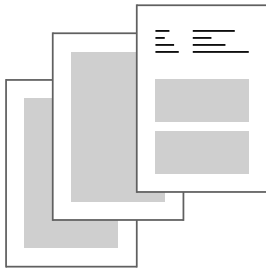


## Making the most of your presentation



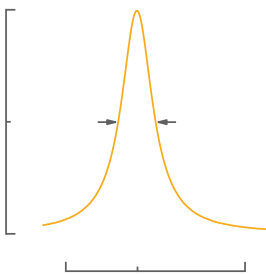
Our most demanded lecture on university campuses, *Making the most of your presentation* recommends a systematic approach to preparing and delivering effective oral presentations. Among others, it covers structure, slides, and delivery, as well as stage fright. Needless to say, it also endeavors to be a model of the principles it advocates—an oral presentation that attendees can learn from by way of example.

## Structuring your research paper



Another classic, *Structuring your research paper* can be nicely captured by Hemingway's statement that "prose is architecture, not interior decoration." It explains how to structure a paper from the point of view of the readers, not the logic of the authors, to make it more convincing. Specifically, it covers structure from the whole paper down to paragraphs, and discusses how to construct effective abstracts.

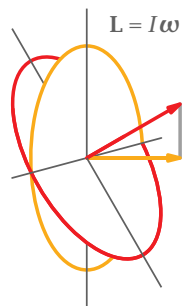
## Conveying messages with graphs



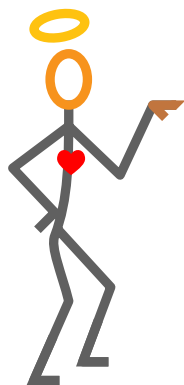
The perfect companion to the previous two lectures, *Conveying messages with graphs* takes a good look at what is a frequently yet very often poorly used communication device in papers and presentations: graphs. It discusses how to choose the right graph for a given data set and a given research question, how to optimize the graph's construction to reveal the data, and finally how to phrase a useful caption.

Universities, research institutes, and conferences—especially those that have already hosted our triad of sessions on effective scientific communication—are increasingly interested in our two new themes: education and persuasion. *Teaching is not learning* is for anyone involved in making other people learn, from teaching assistants to confirmed professors, whereas *Persuading others* is for anyone, period. Besides for lectures, both topics are ideally suited to half-day interactive workshops in small groups, during which the skills can actually be demonstrated.

## Teaching is not learning



Many of us who teach feel they have done their job by “covering all material.” But have students learned? In reality, have we done anything that a good book or video sequence could not have done in our place? Observing that “teaching is not learning,” the lecture points out the limitations of traditional approaches, establishes the real value that an instructor can add, and provides strategies that will help students learn.



## Persuading others

Persuasion skills are a critical asset for any career: we must convince employers to hire us, get the boss to let us start a project, or get coworkers to help out. This lecture takes a rational approach to persuasion: it covers how to use personal/organizational power, how to deploy tactics on four different human planes, and how to harness basic social influences to get other people to accede more easily to our requests.



An engineer from the Louvain School of Engineering and PhD in applied physics from Stanford University, Jean-luc Doumont now devotes his time and energy to training engineers, scientists, business people, and other rational minds in effective communication, pedagogy, statistical thinking, and related themes.

With his rational background, Jean-luc approaches communication in an original, engineering-like way that contrasts sharply with the tradition of the field, rooted in the humanities. He is thus well received by students and professionals in search of a method they can apply with the same rigor they have come to value in every other aspect of their occupations.

An articulate, entertaining, and thought-provoking speaker, Jean-luc successfully reaches a wide range of audiences around the world, in English, French, Dutch, and Spanish—as a trainer or invited speaker at an array of companies, top-ranked universities, research laboratories, and international conferences.

Jean-luc is the author of *Trees, maps, and theorems*, a critically acclaimed book on “effective communication for rational minds,” and of the Nature series *English communication for scientists* on nature.com.



Frequently  
asked  
questions

How much time should we foresee for your lecture?

Ideally, our lectures are run in two hours (incl. Q&A), with 90 min. also possible, if deemed more suitable. When reserving a room, please take into account that Jean-luc likes to be there an hour in advance in order to get ready technologically and mentally, and that some attendees hang around after the talk to ask him additional or more personal questions.

Do you allow audio/video recording of your lecture?

For copyright reasons, and also because we speak for the audience, not for the camera, we do not allow any recording of our sessions. We thus recommend that all interested people attend our lectures “live.” Everyone—present or not—is welcome to download the corresponding handouts from our site, however.

What are your room and audiovisual requirements?

The room should have the right size—not too large, that is (packed rooms create the best atmosphere). The screen should be large enough for the room and ideally not too high: attendees should be able to see Jean-luc from head to toe next to the screen, with no desk or other item in the way. The projector should be bright enough to keep lights switched on. A board or flip-chart is handy to answer questions. The microphone, if necessary, should be a wireless, clip-on model. Jean-luc brings his own Apple laptop.

Can attendees obtain a (signed) copy of your book?

We are happy to provide discounts for bulk orders as well as for individual orders within two weeks after the lecture. If you expect that many attendees will want their copy, the best is an advance order to allow a consolidated shipment to your location (thereby significantly reducing the shipping costs) and a book-signing session right after the lecture. We cannot ship signed copies of the book, however.