

**Day 2:**  
**Effective Mentorship  
in Research Communication:  
A Workshop**

University of Colombo Faculty of Medicine  
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### Introductory Items

- Welcome back
- Introduction: Sian Harris
- Plans
  - Case-based discussions: providing guidance on presentations and proposals
  - Presentation by Sian: social media
  - Case-based discussion: communicating with public
  - Wrap-up items (including another case)
  - Shreenika: introduction to online learning system



### Preparing Poster Presentations and Oral Presentations

### Obtaining Chances to Present

- Unsolicited invitations
- Submission and peer review of abstracts
  - Sometimes abstracts of proposed presentations
    - may be longer than abstracts of journal articles
    - may include one or two figures or tables
  - Of course, follow the instructions.
  - Write abstracts readably, especially as reviewers are busy.

## Case 20: Poster Perils

Vince, a PhD student, has submitted an abstract for a poster presentation, and it has been accepted. "I know I'm really busy finishing my dissertation," Vince tells his mentor, Dr. Richard Lee, "but there's not much to a poster. I'm sure I can do mine the day before the conference." What should Dr. Lee say to Vince? What main guidance about poster presentations might he provide?

## Case 21: Speaking of Presentations

Hong, a PhD student, has submitted an abstract for an oral presentation at a conference, and it has been accepted. She admits to her mentor that she worries about presenting, as her native language is not English. Her mentor, Dr. Lupita Hernandez, reassures her, noting that she herself is a non-native speaker and has given many successful talks at conferences. Dr. Hernandez says she will give Hong some general advice on presenting at conferences and some advice especially for non-native speakers of English. What main points should Dr. Hernandez include?

## Case Discussions: Oral and Poster Presentations

- Some resources
  - Your experience
  - Pages 44–51 of handout material
- Each group should write down the following to hand in:
  - 3–5 key pointers on poster presentations
  - 3–5 key pointers on oral presentations (including at least 1 for non-native speakers)
  - If desired, questions or additional pointers



## Oral and Poster Presentations: Top Tips



Tips for Both Oral  
and Poster Presentations

1. Start early.

2. Obtain—and follow—any  
instructions.

3. Consider the audience.

4. Condense.

5. Get feedback from others  
(including good proofreaders).

6. Revise.

7. Rehearse.

8. Be positive.



Tips for Oral Presentations

9. Structure the talk largely as a story.

(IMRAD format—Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion— basically a narrative)

10. Consider building up to the most important content.

11. Include much less detail than in a journal article.

12. Begin and end strongly.

13. Remember: People must understand what you say as you say it.

14. Avoid unfamiliar abbreviations and acronyms.

15. Beware of using too many slides.

(Typically, about 1 slide per minute is the limit.)

16. Keep slides simple and uncrowded.

(a guideline for text: no more than 7 lines of 7 words each)

17. Generally use bullet points, not paragraphs.

(OK to use phrases rather than sentences)

18. Make sure all lettering is legible.

(For main text, beware of using less than 28 point.)

19. Time the presentation carefully when you rehearse.

20. Arrive early, and make sure audiovisuals are working.

21. Speak slowly and clearly.

22. Look at the audience.

23. Show enthusiasm.

24. Avoid distracting habits.

25. Briefly repeat each question.

26. Answer each question briefly.

27. If you don't know an answer, don't fake it.



## Tips for Poster Presentations

28. If you can, base the poster on images that present key messages and attract viewers.

29. Plan to include little text.

(a general guideline:  
500–1000 words)

30. Plan to make the poster understandable on its own.

31. Organize the poster logically.

32. Place the text in vertical columns.

33. Include plenty of white space.

34. Unless required, don't include an abstract.

35. Use large enough type for the title.

**72 point or more**

36. Don't write the title in all capital letters.

- TITLE OF YOUR POSTER
- Title of Your Poster
- Title of your poster

37. Choose images that both attract and inform.

- Photos
- Flow charts
- Graphs
- Other

38. Keep images simple, so they are quick to understand.

39. If feasible, use graphs rather than tables.

40. Make images large enough.

41. Remember to label each image.

42. Keep each section of text relatively brief.

43. Make the text large enough to read easily.

(at least 18 points)

44. Where feasible, use bulleted or numbered lists (not paragraphs).

45. If paragraphs are used, keep them short.

Also: Do not right-justify.

46. Include your contact information.

47. Prepare presentations of various lengths.

(for example: 1, 3, and 5 minutes)

48. Think ahead about questions you might be asked.

49. Perhaps have handout material available.

- Copies of the poster
- Reprints of papers
- CVs
- Business cards

## Some Resources on Posters

- “Designing Scientific Posters” by Colin Purrington (posted at <http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/posterdesign>)
- “Better Posters: A Resource for Improving Poster Presentations” (blog at <http://betterposters.blogspot.com/>)



## A Final Tip for Both Oral and Poster Presentations

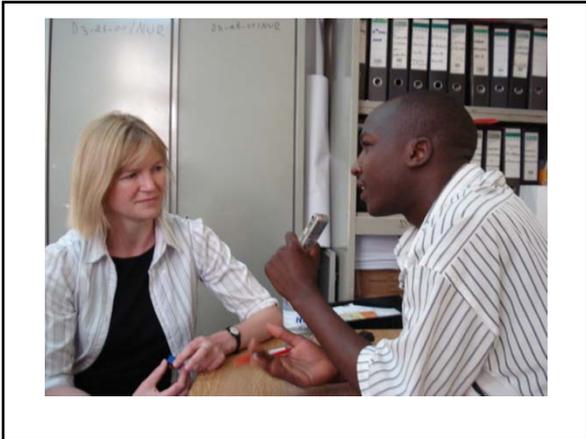
50. Use the experience to enhance your future presentations, publications, and research.



## Case 22: Gratitude and Grant Proposals

Ann (from Case 1) has now completed her PhD, thanks in part to the excellent mentorship from Dr. Mary Brown, and she has accepted a position at another university. As a faculty member there, Ann (now Dr. Ann Wilson) is expected to obtain research grants. Grateful for the mentorship that Dr. Brown has provided over the years, Ann seeks her advice again. Dr. Brown has obtained some grants and has peer reviewed grant proposals, and so she is well prepared to respond. What points should she emphasize about preparing grant proposals?

*(Some resources: your own experience, material on pages 52–64)*



### Case 24: At the Science Café

Lynn (in Case 23) quickly becomes known as an excellent lecturer, and she is invited to speak at the local science café, a monthly event that members of the public attend to learn about science. Therefore Lynn asks her mentor, Dr. David Black, for advice on speaking in such a venue. How do you suggest that Dr. Black proceed?

### Case 25: In the Media Spotlight

Craig (from Case 5) ends up publishing his study in a leading journal in his specialty. His university disseminates a news release about it, and a radio reporter, a television reporter, and two newspaper reporters ask to interview him. Craig has not been interviewed for the popular media before, and so he seeks advice from his mentor, Dr. Linda Moore, who has been interviewed many times. How should Dr. Moore proceed? What suggestions should she make?

### Case 26: Writing for the Public Too

Zeke (from Case 3) overcomes his writer's block and finds that he likes writing, both for peers and for the public. He tweets a lot and has a relatively popular blog. Now a magazine has invited him to submit an article about his research field. Zeke approaches his mentor, Dr. Kevin Yates, for advice. Dr. Yates has not written for popular magazines but recalls that his colleague Dr. Laura Hill has done so. How might Dr. Yates proceed? What advice should one or both the mentors provide?

## Communicating Specialized Information to the Public

### Some Reasons to Communicate Specialized Information to the Public

- Interest to public
- Usefulness to public
- Chance to foster support of your field
- Chance to attract people to your field
- Obligation if work is publicly funded
- Other

### A Few Suggestions: Presenting Specialized Information to the Public

- Analyze the audience.
- Use mainly simple, familiar language.
- Define unfamiliar terms.
- Relate unfamiliar items to familiar ones.
- Include people.
- Include narrative. (Tell stories.)
- Consider the visual aspect.
- Check with the audience.

### Working with the Popular Media

### A Few Suggestions: Working with the Media

- Find out the reporter's
  - Background
  - Task
  - Deadline
- If possible, provide some written information.
- Present information in a way directly understandable by the public.

### Suggestions (cont)

- Consider the visual aspect.
- Perhaps check the reporter's understanding.
- If there's a main point you want to make, find a way to make it.
- Offer to review a draft for accuracy.
- Perhaps provide feedback after the item is published, posted, or broadcast.

### A Resource

[Presentation on Writing Accessibly about Science](#)



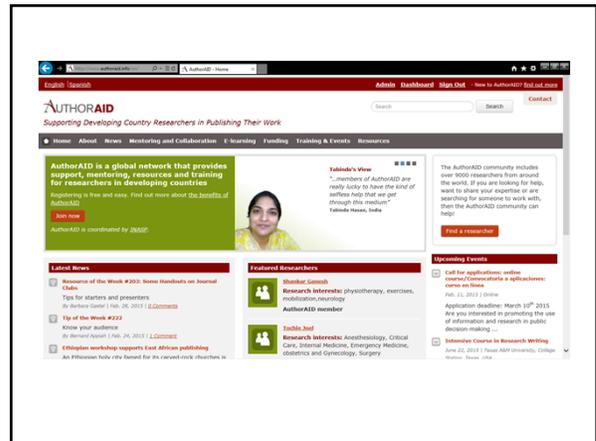
## Case 27: Looking Ahead

The PhD students in these cases are about to graduate. They appreciate the guidance their mentors have provided in research communication (as well as in other realms), and they want to provide such guidance when they themselves have mentees. They also want to keep learning about the evolving field of research communication. What do you suggest?

## Some Resources

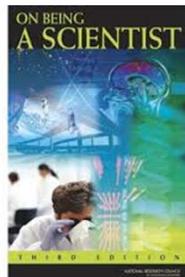
### AuthorAID ([www.authoraid.info](http://www.authoraid.info))

- Project mainly to help authors in developing countries to write about and publish their work
- Includes
  - A resource library
  - An e-mail discussion list
  - A blog
  - And more
- Provides opportunity to obtain mentors
- From INASP (the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications)

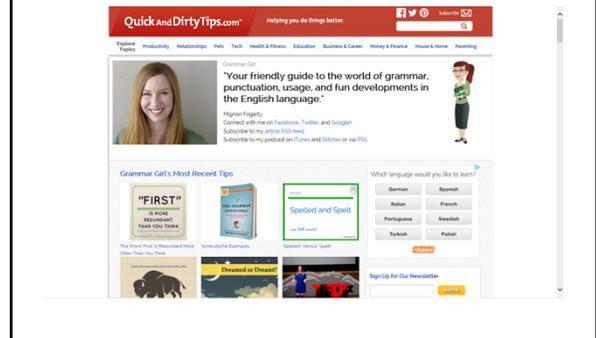


### *On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research*

- [www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12192](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12192)
- Book on ethics in research and publication
- From the US National Academies
- Available online
- Intended mainly for early-career researchers
- Also relevant to scholars other than scientists



### Grammar Girl ([grammar.quickanddirtytips.com](http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com))



## OneLook Dictionary Search ([www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com))

OneLook  
Dictionary Search

Word, phrase, or pattern:  Search

Example searches

1000000	Find definitions of bluebird
1000000	Find words and phrases that start with blue
1000000	Find words and phrases that end with blue
1000000	Find words that start with blue and end with blue
1000000	Find words that start with blue that have a meaning related to blue
1000000	Find any adjectives that start with blue
1000000	Find any words related to blue
1000000	Find words related to the average winter sport
1000000	Find phrases that contain the word winter
1000000	Find phrases that spell out w-i-n-t-e-r

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19,633,000 words in 1061 dictionaries indexed - [Today's word](#) - [Help](#)

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## Academic Phrasebank ([www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/))

MANCHESTER <sup>1824</sup> Academic Phrasebank  
The University of Manchester

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Home Page

GENERAL LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

- Being Critical
- Being Cautious
- Classifying and Listing
- Compare and Contrast
- Defining Terms
- Describing Trends
- Explaining Causality
- Giving Examples
- Signalling Transition
- Writing about the Past

The Academic Phrasebank is a general resource for academic writers. It aims to provide you with examples of some of the phraseological 'nuts and bolts' of writing organised according to the main sections of a research paper or dissertation (see the top menu). Other phrases are listed under the more general communicative functions of academic writing (see the menu on the left). The resource should be particularly useful for writers who need to report their research work. The phrases, and the headings under which they are listed, can be used simply to assist you in thinking about the content and organisation of your own writing, or the phrases can be incorporated into your writing where this is appropriate. In most cases, a certain amount of creativity and adaptation will be necessary when a phrase is used. The items in the Academic Phrasebank are mostly content neutral and generic in nature; in using them, therefore, you are not stealing other people's ideas and this does not constitute plagiarism. For some of the entries, specific content words have been included for illustrative purposes, and these should be substituted when the phrases are used. The resource was designed primarily for academic and scientific writers who are non-native speakers of English; however, native speaker writers may still find much of the material helpful. In fact, recent data suggest that the majority of users are native speakers of English. More about Academic Phrasebank

This site was created by John Marley. If you could spare just two or three minutes of your time, I would be extremely grateful for any feedback on Academic Phrasebank. Please click here to access a very short questionnaire. Thank you.

ACADEMIC PHRASEBANK.FW  
A pdf version of this resource is now available from the University

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- Reading Comprehension
- Language Proficiency

- English Reference
- English Objects
- English Phrase Verbs
- English Irregular Verbs
- Grammar Glossary

For Teachers

- Teacher Handouts & Printables
- Articles
- Language Aids

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YOU'RE JUST A CLICK AWAY



## Wrap-Up Items

- Cases from your own experience
  - Questions and answers
  - Workshop evaluation
  - Presentation of certificates
- 
- Shreenika: introduction to online learning system



Thank You!

