

PRBB Intervals Course Proposal

Course Title

"Explaining your research to ANYONE - inside or outside science"

Proposed date(s)

15 June 2017

Course Language

English

Course Leader(s) and very brief summary of relevant qualifications and experience (no more than 2 lines for each trainer)

Eric May, Media Consultant - Emmy Award winner, helped thousands of people worldwide express ideas more effectively to their audiences; working with Intervals since 2008.

Rationale for course (why is this course of interest for the PRBB staff?)

Knowledge and understanding alone isn't enough; having the tools and techniques to express what you know effectively to people inside and outside your discipline and outside science is critical. The techniques in this course will help your audiences understand better what you do, what it means and why it should be funded.

Course aim - general

Participants will get practical techniques to express and explain complex ideas and aspects of their research to different types of audiences, including those inside and outside their particular discipline, the news media and the general public.

Specific learning outcomes (what new skills, knowledge &/or attitudes will participants take away from the course?)

The course will give participants tools to identify and understand the needs of different audiences and how to choose appropriate methods to reach out to them effectively.

Course contents (outline of topics to be covered)

"Understanding audiences and different perceptions about science" is a discussion about how the public, the news media and researchers perceive what they do.

"Identifying compelling ideas in scientific research" uses a practical exercise in which participants explain their research in a brief presentation, then the entire group is asked "what do you remember?" The idea is to identify characteristics (i.e. humanity, compassion, emotion, shared values), etc that have resonance with audiences.

"Explaining complex ideas effectively" uses a practical exercise in which participants explain an aspect of their research in detail, then are asked to do it again using an "approximate answer" - both versions are videotaped and compared for effectiveness.

"Handling criticism and the skeptics" uses a practical exercise where participants are videotaped being asked the question they fear the most and the responses are discussed by the entire group; concludes with some tips on persuasion and building confidence in public speaking situations.

"Telling the story of your research" is a practical exercise showing how storytelling values, and finding story angles in research, have impact on audiences.

"Expressing ideas in sound bites" is a practical exercise giving participants methods to express ideas about their research clearly and concisely – videotape and group discussion.

"Explaining science visually" is a practical exercise in which participants can use online tools, props or flip chart paper to express an aspect of their work visually.

Training methods

Interactive; principles and practical exercises based on the participants' own work.

Target group in PRBB (Senior scientists, postdocs, predocs, management/admin staff, all residents)

All of the above

Number of participants (maximum)

12

Total course hours (Please specify: a) direct training with instructor present b) required self-study.

Note: only the direct training hours will be included in the post-course certificate.

7 hours and 1 hour review of material in advance

Distribution of course (hours/days)

1 day

Pre-course preparation and/or between sessions?

Brief review of online material in advance as specified by trainer.

Material participants need to bring (laptops, etc...)

Laptops and specific examples of their research; additional materials such as online tools, props, objects as needed, to be specified in pre-course preparation.

Relevant background reading/ audiovisual/websites or other materials

Brief review of online material in advance as specified by trainer.