



Communicating science to non-specialists and journalists

12th June 2009

Tutors: Dr Claire Ainsworth and Dr Jon Copley, SciConnect, UK

09:00 - 09:05 Welcome address:

Alessandra Bendiscioli, EMBO Science & Society Programme

First session: 09:05 - 10:30

- Introductions and aims. Brainstorm: why bother with science outreach?
- Opportunities for public engagement: press, broadcast, new media, and other forms.
- Fundamental principles of communicating to non-specialists.
- How to grab an audience's attention: tricks you can learn from journalists.
- News In Brief case study: the quintessence of effective communication and news writing.
- Exercise: study a research paper abstract: how would you turn it into a popular article?
- How to inspire an audience and show why your research matters.
- How science hits the headlines: a day in the life of a science journalist.
- What press officers do and how to work with them. How press releases and embargoes work.
- Where it can go wrong. Case study: a *Science* paper that was widely and inaccurately reported. Where did the error arise?
- How to communicate risk and uncertainty.
- Communicating with journalists; the responsibilities of scientists and the new Royal Society guidelines. The responsibilities of journalists.

10:30 - 11:00: *Coffee break*

Second session: 11:00 - 13:00

- The importance of using clear, lively language. Avoiding jargon.
- Exercise: draft the first paragraph of a popular science-style explanation of your work. Some volunteers then read out their paragraphs for feedback and discussion.
- Storytelling: how narrative is used to communicate science in longer journalistic articles, TV documentaries and public lectures.
- Oral science communication and how it differs from the written word.
- Requirements of radio/ podcast interviews.
- Exercise: Some volunteers come up to be interviewed for a science podcast.
- Science on TV: what TV crews want. Analysis of a science TV package.
- The future of science outreach--using blogs and other new media.
- Wrap up and discussion.
- ENDS