

Online Webinars in English for PhDs & Post-Docs



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Our online courses are comprised of **three-hour** module blocks.
Most webinars are delivered in two or three such modules.

In our experience, PhD students find these webinars easiest to absorb and also more combinable with other responsibilities, such as managing laboratory experiments or departmental commitments, when these three-hour blocks are offered on subsequent days.

Usual timings are 9.00 – 12.00 or 14.00- 17.00

We can offer our webinars via our own Zoom pro account, or if desired through your institution's videoconference system

All of our webinars are designed to be non-overlapping yet complementary and can be combined in any number of ways to create comprehensive learning programs.

Effective Strategies for PhD Productivity and Self-Care

NEW

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Maximum output from yourself, your projects and your cooperation partners

On three subsequent mornings, this group experience workshop examines common challenges faced by PhD researchers in maintaining productivity without compromising well-being. Using a combination of guided discussion, small-group work, and expert-led tutorials, participants will engage with issues stemming from three sources: from individual behaviours, from workload pressures, and from interpersonal dynamics.

Solutions to problems from the self:

- How to change our habits, thinking patterns and mindset
- Keeping stress at bay, and developing academic resilience
- Dismantling practical and psychological barriers to writing
- Good habits of personal self-care for productivity

Solutions to problems from the workload:

- Simple time and activity management techniques that really work
- Retaining focus and completing on time
- 7 methods of prioritisation
- How clarity of purpose, vision and defined goals inform where to spend your effort
- How to make hard choices: looking beyond completion
- Simplifying your PhD – productive work organization methods
- Knowing when enough is enough

Solutions to problems from other people

- Dealing effectively with external blocks and disruptions
- Managing your relationship with your supervisor
- Leadership from all positions in the hierarchy
- Appreciative communication and managing conflict
- Learning to flex your communication style

Methods

The seminar comprises inspirational input, lively and challenging exercises, small group work and group discussion. An exciting learning atmosphere is created, and sustainable results obtained.

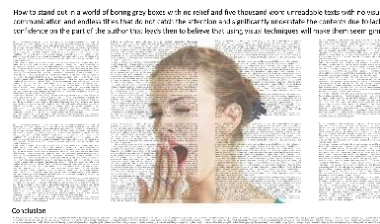
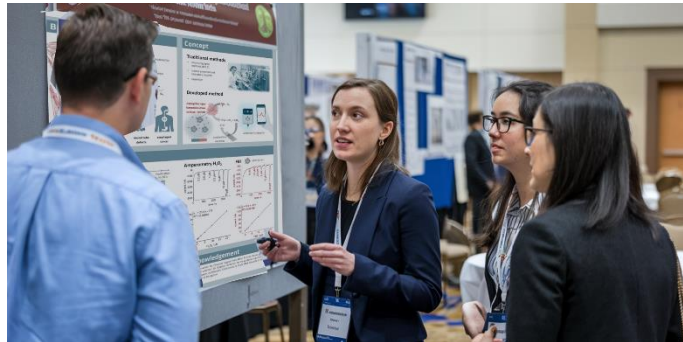
Poster Power: Designing & Delivering with Impact

NEW

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Standing out in a world of grey boxes

A guide to the essential steps to designing a powerful, memorable poster. What has visual impact – and what to avoid. Practical, easy-to-apply tips to create a high standard of output. Quick wins for getting the best out of PowerPoint to obtain a professional finish. Day three of the course follows one week after the first two days of tutorial and is a 'mini conference' where you have a chance to present your re-designed poster for feedback and give a brief practice presentation.

- Starting right: writing and editing the text to provide a powerful focus
- Essentials of visual logic: Balance, emphasis and prioritisation
- Finding the optimum layout. Fixing the 'too much data' problem
- Principles of 'Grid Design';
- PowerPoint techniques and brief top tips tutorial
- Use of imagery: What works, and what doesn't – with examples
- The importance of the title block, both in words and images
- Presentation of data: re-artworking data for maximum impact. Designing infographics.
- Colour Choice: effective use of 'compulsory' templates; psychological associations, essentials of colour theory
- Top tips for both live and online poster presentation, and leveraging the differences.
- Creating dynamic Interactive and animated presentations of static posters.

Using a lively mix of design theory and practical techniques, software tutorial, examination and discussion of over one hundred posters, and group evaluation work, this course examines the essentials of creating an impactful and memorable poster design. We also examine top tips for presenting your poster, both live and online.

This course includes the opportunity to show your own poster design, and give a brief practice presentation to obtain feedback from your colleagues and individual advice from the coach.

NEW

Combining Classic and Agile Project Management

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



How to create successful projects and productive project-teams

This webinar examines the foundational concepts of project management, highlighting both classical and agile approaches, simultaneously delivering a clear understanding of project phases.

Using interactive small group exercises, we examine the essentials for project setup, emphasizing structured planning, transparency, and leadership strategies. Given the variety of team dynamics, we examine techniques to manage differing personalities, and look at methods of mitigating resistance, and facilitating clear communication through appropriate tools and meetings.

Furthermore, the webinar addresses common project challenges, goal-setting strategies, and effective time management techniques to prepare participants for the leadership of successful projects, and to inspire team collaboration.

Content:

- What is a project?: Definition and outline
- What is the difference between classical and agile project management?
- What are the phases of a project? Types of project working styles
- Understanding Agile terminology: Sprint, Scrum and other buzzwords
- How do I set up a project? Project design - W-questions - Transparency
- How to build a productive project team (3 key tools) Leadership styles and models
- How do I make the most of the differences in the personalities of the team members?
- Mitigating resistance
- Information and communication in the team (tools and meetings)
- Typical difficulties in the project and how to overcome them. Goal Clarity.
- Time management as a team

Methods:

The seminar comprises inspirational input, personal insight exercises, small group interactive work with consolidation exercises for 'learning by doing' and group discussion. A lively learning atmosphere is created, and sustainable results obtained.

NEW

Future Skills for Leadership and Teamwork

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



21st Century team leadership and membership – Re-defining our roles for future-fitness

Leaders, and those who seek to develop their leadership skills, cannot rely merely on the old 'tried and trusted' methods – sweeping changes in society require a greater appreciation of the value of all forms of diversity in the team, and how to harness it. New models and styles of leadership are widely being adopted and need to be understood and accommodated. Open working frameworks, new work methods and innovative project management modes present new opportunities – and new challenges. Teamwork is increasingly being perceived as a key personal skill. This seminar builds your knowledge of current developments in attitudes and approaches to the leadership and teamwork standards of the future.

Content:

- What does leadership and teamwork in the academic world mean? What is different?
- What is classical and future-oriented leadership in a VUCA-world?
- What are future skills for leaders?
- How to build a productive project team (3 key tools)
- How do I tap into the differences of the team members (Diversity - e.g, generations, nationalities, culture) in a productive way?
- Information and communication in the team in a remote working team (meetings and tools)
- Non-hierarchical conflict solution using the win-win approach

Methods

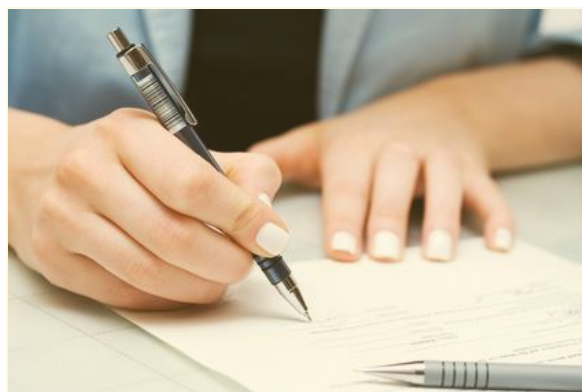
The seminar comprises inspirational input, lively and challenging exercises, small group work and group discussion. An exciting learning atmosphere is created, and sustainable results obtained.

Academic and Scientific Writing in English

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Achieving higher levels of written English

This course examines how to develop powerful focus in your writing – an infallible guide to developing the best structure, and effectively communicating your ideas to your target audience. We look at how to systematically improve the impact, clarity and accuracy of your chosen words. You will receive a toolbox of methods including a range of easily-applied ‘quick tips’ that will improve how seriously your ideas are taken.

You will receive a clear process to follow when approaching an important piece of writing. How to start, develop and express your ideas plus a checklist of conceptual and practical filters to apply to your work to edit and improve your earlier drafts - shaping your writing from ‘good enough’ to ‘exactly fitted to its purpose’.

In this tip-filled seminar, we will examine:

- Appropriate levels of formality
- Tips for writing productivity
- Nailing the problem of structure
- Achieving a good ‘flow’ of ideas and expression
- Achieving impact by careful word choice
- Describing problems, solutions and outcomes
- Clarity, brevity and style of English
- Presenting data and data commentary
- Understanding the most common mistakes
- Hated words to avoid in your text

All of these writing skills are examined in the context of a variety of writing and editing tasks. The online presentation includes individual exercises with feedback, group discussion and small group work, as well as inspiring input from an established native-speaking communications expert. The result is a lively and varied learning experience for all.

In this course, the participants also work on examining and editing a short piece of their own writing (500-600 words – for example, an abstract or an extract from the introduction, a key passage or conclusion). This will require the participants to be sent a pre-course briefing during the week preceding the course. Feedback is also provided on an individual basis by the course leader.

Planning the Completion of your Dissertation

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



A concentrated and well-structured finish to achieve your goal

Towards the end of your doctoral study many questions arise, which are discussed in this module. The course addresses the many factors affecting the effective structuring of the final phase of your doctorate, and focusses on proven methods that will form the framework of clear future perspectives for the period after the successful dissertation.

Content

- Effective use of your time: How to focus your efforts
- Daily, weekly, monthly and whole-PhD Plans
- 7 methods of prioritisation
- Planning and focussing on the writing process and the correction phase
- Dismantling practical and psychological barriers to writing
- Techniques for productivity
- Problems in the End-phase of the PhD - with solutions
- Getting the best from your supervisor
- Staying motivated
- Developing clear goals for your PhD and beyond

Methods

The seminar comprises inspirational input, lively and challenging exercises, small group work and group discussion. An exciting learning atmosphere is created, and sustainable results obtained.

Live, Virtual and Online Networking & Personal Branding

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Setting your Course for Future Success

Knowing how to develop and maintain an effective network is a key career strategy.

To build a well-functioning network is a vital component in planning a science career. Many highly-qualified scientists have taken a route to build their career that has been arduous and lonely. This module explores less stressful methods of career development, by the strategic use of networking.

Whether planning a career in the scientific or commercial world, awareness of the priorities and needs of funding bodies or potential employers or backers is a key to success. This seminar provides an overview of the structure of networking - the strengths and weaknesses of working in networks and allows for an opportunity to optimise your own networking activity and strategies for acquisition.

Content

- The purpose of a network
- Construction and maintenance of a co-operation network (or research group)
- Strategic co-operation within the scientific community:
universities and non-university research institutions, businesses and organizations
- Growing the network: how to approach a prospective partner
- Typical problems in networks
- Post-corona techniques: how to network at a social distance
- Use of online networks; linked in, academic networks, Twitter and other social media
- Formal and informal networks in the scientific community
- The advantages of **giving** as a professional work-style

Methods

This highly interactive and participative two-day course is a lively mix of tutorials, exercises and feedback.

Scientific Communication

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Writing Scientific Articles, Grant Applications, Newsletters and Websites

Audience-focussed and purpose-oriented communication techniques.

What matters is NOT what you want to say, what matters is what your target audience wants to hear – their interests, and not yours. Flex your style and your choice of words to speak in the language that your targets understand and feel comfortable with. Develop the clarity and natural-sounding flow of your writing in a style that suits its purpose - and the preferences of the intended reader.

We also examine common mistakes in English and ‘bust’ a few myths about the rules of English – for example - Finishing a sentence with a preposition? What are you thinking of? And as for starting a sentence with the word ‘and’... And what about split infinitives? – is it necessary to be so absolutely compliant with the ‘rules’?

In conclusion, we explore the special approaches needed for a variety of communication needs including writing grant proposals, preparing effective press releases and writing newsletters.

Content

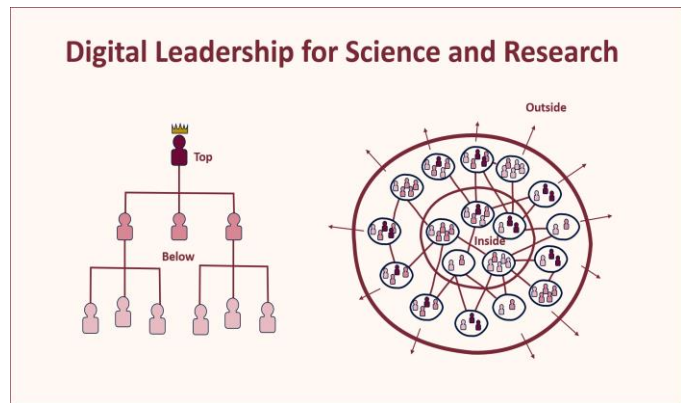
- Targeting your message and developing a good structure
- Editing skills – seeking clarity and brevity.
- Developing the flow of your text
- Proof-reading and final presentation
- Common mistakes in English
- Myths of grammar & style
- Using diversity-aware language
- Principles of plain English
- Top tips for writing press releases
- Writing newsletters that people actually want to read

Digital Leadership for Science & Research

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



21st Century leadership principles and practice

The aim of this webinar is to familiarize participants with the basics of future-oriented leadership in a working environment where time pressure and complexity are strong drivers and there is a need for virtual collaboration and remote working.

Content

- Classical leadership and transformational leadership - a comparison of leadership models
- Self-reflection – what is your unique leadership style?
- 4 steps to Leadership - Self-accountability
- Challenges of leadership and cooperation models that do not rely on authority
- Structure of successful information and communication flow
- Tool selection for virtual collaboration
- Agile planning, dealing with unforeseen factors and circumstances
- Putting together potential-oriented teams and considering differences
- Managing typical conflicts constructively

This seminar comprises inspirational input, group work, discussion and individual exercises which combine to form a powerful learning experience, with lasting effects.

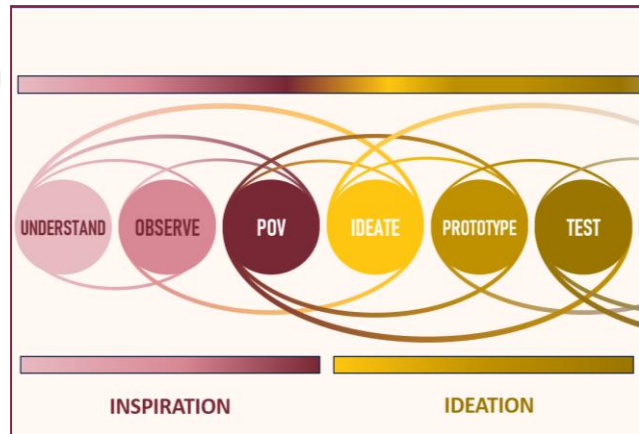
Design Thinking in Academia

How new ideas, approaches and objects come into the world

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour teleconferences

Language: English



Innovative problem-solving techniques for leadership and cultural change in universities

Globalisation and digitalisation are changing our individual lives and social conditions at a rapid pace and require a new approach to problems at all levels.

In the seminar you will learn, among other techniques, to understand the Design Thinking process, step-by-step and apply it to the basis of your specific question or design challenge.

Using new creative methods, you will learn to identify problems that are systematically relevant to your everyday life and to develop user and employee-oriented solutions.

This seminar provides participants with the most important basics of Design Thinking and an overview of innovative creative techniques for problem solving.

Content:

- What is Design Thinking?
- How can it be transferred from an entrepreneurial focus to the university context?
- How does the entire Design Thinking process work?
- The change arises in the mind - Which other innovative creative techniques expand the thinking and action framework?
- How can cooperation in cross-disciplinary projects with very different employees be successful as a basis for innovative methods and discoveries?

This seminar comprises inspirational input, group work, discussion and individual exercises which combine to form a powerful learning experience, with lasting effects.

Solution-Oriented Conflict Management

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Strategies for effectively handling conflict situations in the academic world

Conflicts, intelligently handled, are an opportunity for personal growth and a chance to deepen relationships. Conflicts are present in daily life, but also of course in the wider business world. Whether you are a participant in a conflict, or attempting to mediate one, it is always useful to acquire new strategies and new ways of behaviour in conflicted situations.

This allows greater flexibility in dealing with different scenarios and characters and reduces eventual suffering. This seminar provides both the opportunity to reflect on one's attitude to conflict, and to put new techniques into practice.

Content

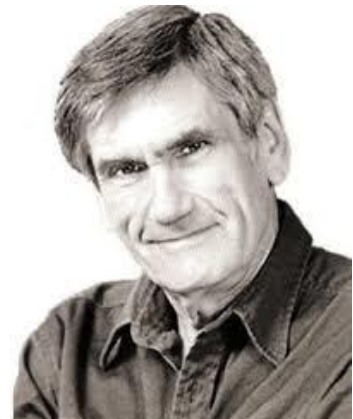
- What is conflict?
- Positive role of conflict - learning effect in conflicts
- Conflicts without suffering - conflicts seen as creative puzzle-solving
- Typical conflict situations (Relationships with supervisors, clients and colleagues)
- Solutions to disagreements and criticism
- Intercultural competence in solving conflicts
- Diversity in the team as a potential rather than a conflict
- Dealing with dependency
- Diversity-competences
- Strategies for dealing with unfair communication (provocation, intrigue, etc.)
- Implementing win-win solutions successfully

Methods

The seminar comprises inspirational input, exercises, small group work and group discussion. A lively learning atmosphere is created, and sustainable results obtained.

Nonviolent Communication for Academics and Scientists

Trainer: Mark Edwards
Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences
Language: English



Applying the extraordinary communication techniques of Marshall Rosenberg to the academic and scientific setting

The work of Marshall Rosenberg has been described as nothing short of world-changing. In this challenging two-day seminar, working with applying his ideas in the scientific context, we are invited to re-evaluate the fundamental attitudes underlying our communication with others and reach a richer, more conscious understanding.

Marshall Rosenberg said that his principles offer us the chance to:

- Increase our ability to live with choice, meaning and connection, and
- Connect empathically with ourselves and others to have more satisfying relationships.

We explore how these principles operate in the scientific and academic setting. Can we really apply an approach based on 'giving from the heart' in the cut-and-thrust of daily professional life? How does not criticising or judging others sit with the long-established practices of academic rigour? Can Scientists or Academics truly be empathetic?

Principles of NVC - Day 1

- The essential principles of non-violent communication
- Communication that blocks compassion
- Observing without evaluating
- Identifying and expressing feelings
- Taking responsibility for our feelings
- Requesting that which would enrich life

Application of NVC - Day 2

- Receiving empathically
- Connecting compassionately with ourselves
- Expressing anger fully
- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Liberating ourselves and counselling others
- Expressing appreciation in nonviolent communication

This seminar comprises inspirational input, group work, discussion and individual exercises which combine to form a powerful learning experience, with lasting effects.

Successful Slide Presentation in English

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Communicating your thinking with clarity, impact and style

This highly interactive and participative presentation course is a lively mix of tutorials, exercises and feedback.

Learn from a Native-speaker how to use and improve your spoken English skills. The course also looks at the latest thinking in presentation theory.

Create your own presentation in English and learn how to sound professional, confident, clear and exciting.

- What makes a great presentation?
- How do you make your message truly memorable?
- Introducing yourself and beginning your presentation
- Voice and body language coaching
- How to write and structure your presentation for maximum effect
- Developing a key message
- Techniques to overcome nerves
- How to make your message memorable
- Involving and engaging the audience – and keeping them engaged
- Effective slide design
- Speaking tips for international audiences
- Dealing with audience questions
- ‘Insurance’ against what might go wrong
- Closing your presentation

This course includes the opportunity to present your own short presentation, to obtain feedback from your colleagues and individual advice from the coach

Powerful Online Presentations in English

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Remote presentations with clarity, impact and style

This highly interactive and participative presentation course is a lively mix of tutorials, exercises and feedback. Learn from a Native-speaker how to use and improve your spoken English skills. Tips and tricks from a professional speaker and presenter. Create your own online presentation in English and learn how to sound professional, confident, clear and exciting.

- What makes a great academic or scientific presentation?
- What is the essential difference for online presentations?
- How do you make your message truly memorable?
- How to write with focus and impact – tailored to your audience
- Developing a key message
- Voice and body language for on-screen presentations
- Techniques to overcome nerves
- Involving and engaging the audience from a distance – and keeping them engaged
- Effective slide design for on-screen presentations
- Managing your on-screen appearance: lighting, backgrounds, using the camera
- How to use online videoconference software to best effect e.g Zoom, Webex, etc.
- Dealing with the online Q & A
- ‘Insurance’ against what might go wrong

This course includes the opportunity to present your own short presentation, to obtain feedback from your colleagues and individual advice from the coach

Understanding Visual Communication

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Learning the language of the visual

Based on the course leader's twelve years' experience as a graphic designer and his subsequent experience in training small printing companies to transform themselves into design consultancies, this course examines the principles of visual communication that will enable primarily verbal communicators to become more effective at expressing their ideas in a compelling visual format.

- Developing visual awareness – how to learn to become more visual
- Visual design principles: visual focus, differentiation, pattern, contrast, simplicity, consistency, colour, typography
- Interactivity and motion graphics
- Integration of words as part of the image
- Applying the principles of visual design to scientific contexts
- Presentation of data and research results in visual forms
- Visual storytelling
- Information visualisation
- Use of photographic images
- Designing icons and graphic representations

Using a lively mix of practical exercises, discussion, tutorial and group work, this course explores the process of applying visual communication principles to academic and scientific subjects.

Moderation Masterclass

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour teleconferences

Language: English



Key skills and techniques in English for chairpersons, facilitators & discussion leaders

Learn powerful and effective methods for conducting all types of meeting from an experienced expert. Pick up the key phrases and techniques that native-speaking facilitators/meeting leaders use in a wide variety of scenarios. Gain an understanding of a wide variety of meeting activities and agenda structures to provide desired outcomes.

- Tactful prompting of participants
- Time-efficiency and keeping to the agenda
- Maintenance of order and ethical standards
- Facilitation of decision-making and outcome generation
- Chairing meetings
 - Before the meeting: what you must do as preparation
 - During the meeting: A breakdown of each phase of the meeting with useful phrases to use in each
- Moderating meetings
- Role and duties of a moderator
 - Moderation communication techniques
- A toolbox of techniques...
 - ... for creative meetings:
 - Brainstorming
 - Six hat thinking/Using a moderation wall
 - Walt Disney strategy/Mind-mapping/Graphic facilitation
 - ...for planning & strategy meetings:
 - Key concept questions/Action planning
 - Goal formation: SMART
 - Using a criteria matrix
 - ...for evaluation/team discussion meetings:
 - Ishikawa fishbone
 - Four-field thinking

This course includes a 'mock panel discussion' session, where you will be given the chance to build your skills at presenting yourself as host and moderating a panel of (sometimes difficult) experts!

PICO – Presenting Interactive Posters

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 3 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English

Secrets of Interactive Poster Design
Mark Edwards, Kompetenzia International, Unter den Linden 10, D10117 Berlin

PICO presentations rely most heavily on three elements – having a powerful and engaging short ‘pitch’ to attract attendees to visit your poster – the so-called ‘two-minute madness’ and then the skills to present the more detailed information to those that visit your interactive poster.

Devising interesting titles

Design and Visual Communication

- How to prepare and practice
- How to catch the attention – and hold it
- Design tips for interactive posters – how to stand out
- How to improve your speaking style: movement, stance, gesture and voice
- How to keep it brief but relevant. Summary and closing techniques.
- How to read your audience – and respond to the conditions

Mastering the art of interactive presentations

PICO presentations rely most heavily on three elements – having a powerful and engaging short ‘pitch’ to attract attendees to visit your poster – the so-called ‘two-minute madness’ and then the possessing the skills to design and then present the more detailed information to those that visit your interactive poster.

You need to be able to present the key elements in a variety of levels of detail, and talk about your research in an inspiring and professional manner. Finally, the display itself needs to be focussed, intuitive and attractively designed. These abilities are what potential backers, research partners or employers will be looking for, in addition to your expertise. This is your opportunity to spend valuable practice time with an experienced native English-speaking presentation specialist and to learn:

- How to prepare and practice
- How to catch the attention – and hold it
- Design tips for interactive posters – how to stand out
- How to improve your speaking style: movement, stance, gesture and voice
- How to keep it brief but relevant. Summary and closing techniques
- How to read your audience – and respond to the conditions

Please note this a highly participative workshop. It is important to bring along your own PICO presentation (or one that you wish to practice with) to this lively and interactive learning experience.

Mark Edwards is an expert on all aspects of scientific communication in English, in the written, visual and verbal forms. Participants of his courses especially appreciate the factual quality of the course content, the long-lasting confidence boost provided and his warm and entertaining style of delivery.

The Life and Career Navigator

*Getting from where you are
to where you want to be*

Trainer: Mark Edwards

Duration: 2 x 3-hour videoconferences

Language: English



Preparing for your unique career profile in scientific and non-scientific fields

Content

- Combinations of career scenarios
- Clarity of direction and life vision - Who am I? What do I really want?
- What is the purpose of my dissertation? What do I truly want to achieve?
- Destination Management - How do I turn my holistic vision into concrete career goals?
- How do I resolve conflicts (e.g. career planning-private goals - the mobility requirement)?
- Dynamic planning methods - goal planning with many unknown elements
- Overview of conventional and unconventional career strategies
- Creating a personal career-specific integrated navigation plan - next steps

Methods

This seminar comprises inspirational input, group work, discussion and individual exercises which combine to form a powerful learning experience, with lasting effects.

Mark Edwards

Background

After founding and operating his own business for 12 years, Mark moved on to develop his experience of the wider commercial world, working in roles in local government and in the commercial sector. His background includes over ten years' experience of working in blue-chip companies such as British Petroleum, and a key role in the top marketing team of the pharmaceuticals company, GlaxoSmithKline.



Mark has also worked as the National Training and Development Manager for a network of over three hundred businesses in the UK, developing and delivering training courses for business owners and their staff on time management, marketing, commercial writing and customer service.

Since 2010, Mark has been successfully delivering specialised English courses in Germany in association with Kompetenzia International. Clients include major universities and research institutes in Berlin and all over Germany.

Previous clients

Satisfied previous clients include:

Freie Universität, Berlin

Technische Universität, Berlin

Humboldt University Graduate School

Potsdam Graduate School

Helmholtz Zentrum Berlin

Max-Born-Institut

Robert Koch Institute

Hasso Plattner Institute

Potsdam University

Charité Teaching Hospital

University of Rostock Library

University of Mannheim

Ruhr University Bochum

European School of Management &
Technology