The Art of Presenting Science - Solving the attention problem

GIJS MEEUSEN

April 27, 2026 to May 15, 2026

Seminar Room - Blue Lecture Room - Mir Puig Seminar Room

One of the main challenges in the field of science communication is to present your work in a way that keeps the audience's attention. Although the content is relevant for the audience, most presenters lose them and that is obviously the way of sharing ideas. This course addresses the issue of attention loss by analyzing it through a strategy developed at Artesc and utilizing communication theory. Through this approach, participants gain insights into why attention wanes and learn strategies to rectify these issues effectively.

Dates: 27th, 28th, 29 th , 30th of April and 14th, 15th of May - Students will be divided in two groups; each group will attend a total of 18 hours of course spread in these dates.

Venue: Seminar Room (April 27, 29, 30) - Blue Lecture Room (April 28) - Mir Puig Seminar Room (May 14&15).

Target group: PhD students and Postdoctoral researchers. Priority will be given to 2nd and 3 rd year PhD students

Available places: 14

Training content:

Session 1

Here we lay the foundation for the course and address the first layer of details involved in getting it right.

Session 2

In this session, we have time to look at individual presentations and find an individual list of pitfalls. Next, we look at the story they made and review it on the level of story functions. That step allows us to use everything that works in prose to make compelling science stories. Next, we take the first step of restoring our normal dynamical communication style in presenting.

Session 3

In this third session we get to the last tool you need to keep attention up: style. In a normal conversation, we do not change the subject. In a presentation, that is common. As we do not do this in normal communication, it turns out to be a challenge on stage. If participants solve this problem, they can present and keep attention up as long as they want.

Session 4

In the fourth session, the participants show that they can overcome 60% of pitfalls we found

in the second session. That allows them to be freer to be themselves on stage. The next step is to see if they are free enough to let the content define the changes for a longer time. Other topics of the day are looking at individual stories and the slides they made, and they give and get feedback to make an optimized version.

Session 5

In the fifth session we have an exam in which they show that they can stay out of 95% of their pitfalls, are almost ready to get the dynamical changes to a level where we need them to be, present a transition, and guide our attention to the slides and back. Next, we look at tools to prepare yourself for your performance.

Session 6

In session 6, the participants have the opportunity to show where they ended up. They give a seven-minute presentation in which they apply all the skills they learned. It is stunning to see how many participants succeed in combining all the skills. Next to that, we stand still reacting to questions from the audience and steps to prepare themselves for the next presentation.

Trainer: Dr. Gijs Meeuse

Gijs, director of Artesc, is a Dutch composer with a PhD in physics, who solved this proble of attention loss. He created a coherent theory that allows us to understand why it goe wrong and teaches us how to engage an audience as long as we like.

Hosted by: Academic Affairs