

Janina Linnik
↗ Allschwilerstrasse 51
4055 Basel
✉ janina.linnik@bsse.ethz.ch

Oskari Vinko
↗ Beinwilerstrasse 3
4053 Basel
✉ oskari.vinko@gmail.com

Talking Science Workshop for NCCR Molecular Systems Engineering

Overview

Title: Talking Science

Description: Hands-on workshop on communicating difficult science

Lecturers: Janina Linnik, Oskari Vinko

Date: May 28th, 2018: 8.30 – 12.00 h

Description

Mission

The aim of the workshop is to train scientists to communicate their work clearly and effectively. Scientists of the NCCR Molecular Systems Engineering network have various backgrounds – ranging from biology and chemistry to physics, computer science and engineering. The work in such an interdisciplinary research environment poses additional communication challenges for scientists, but unfortunately, science communication is usually not part of the curriculum. This workshop aims to fill this gap.

Misunderstandings on scientific topics are ubiquitous and can have serious consequences, especially when communicated to the media. We believe that scientists have a responsibility to communicate their work clearly and precisely. Scientists should be aware of misleading simplifications and typical pitfalls, especially when talking to non-experts. In this workshop, we also discuss contemporary problems of popular science communication and provide tools to handle difficult discussions and situations.

Method

This workshop is highly interactive: we use hands-on exercises and feedback from both peers and lecturers to teach the techniques and to apply the skills learned in the lessons.

Content

1. Theory: motivation & introduction.
2. Warm-up: learn about your communication style, learn about the challenges of being a good communicator.
3. Theory: how to make a talk clear and effective.
4. Practice: Give a 1-minute talk, get feedback and repeat (in small groups).

Schedule

08.30 – 08.45	Welcome, motivation, introduction
08.45 – 08.50	<i>Exercise preparation</i>
08.50 – 09.15	Exercise, round 1
09.15 – 09.40	Exercise, round 2
09.40 – 10.00	<i>Short break</i>
10.00 – 10.20	What makes a science talk clear and effective?
10.20 – 10.30	<i>Build small groups</i>
10.30 – 11.10	Practice in small groups, round 1
11.10 – 11.50	Practice in small groups, round 2
11.50 – 12.00	Recap, Q&A, feedback

Evaluation

This workshop has been developed over the last two years: A similar workshop was initially offered at the Department for Biosystems Science and Engineering at ETH in Basel. In 2017, the idea was supported by the BOOST initiative of the University of Basel and *Talking Science* has been offered 5 times as a 3.5 h-workshop – in total with 64 participants from 12 different departments. This workshop has been evaluated by participants during the *Denk Weiter Wochen* at the University of Basel (results attached).

Lecturers

Janina Linnik is a PhD candidate in Computational Systems Biology at ETH Zurich. After graduating from the Free University of Berlin, she moved to Basel in 2015 to join an interdisciplinary project between ETH and the University Hospital Basel. She works together with mathematicians, computer scientists, biologists and clinicians and learned the importance and difficulties of communicating science clearly and precisely across the disciplines. Therefore, she has been organising science communication workshops for students and researchers since 2015.

Oskari Vinko is an ETH Pioneer Fellow and entrepreneur. He moved to Switzerland to study Synthetic Biology at ETH Zurich where he built optogenetic control mechanisms for gene expression. After graduation in 2017, Oskari founded a startup in Life Science laboratory automation, UniteLabs AG, which is his third company. Oskari is internationally awarded communicator (FameLab grand champion 2015) and has been awarded with several pitch awards. Since 2015, he has been training science slammers, students and researchers in science communication

Basel, February 5th, 2018