

Global Partners in Science Communication

Sample One-Day Syllabus

9 am	INTRODUCTION Welcome! It all starts here. We will spend a few minutes to discuss the goals of the two sessions and a few key ideas that will help set the tone for the day.
9:15 am	BOOK CLUB The first session is an icebreaker based on visual communications. Participants will understand the dominance of visuals in communications generally and the untapped potential in science communications in particular. They will tell something about themselves in the process.
9:45 am	R.E.S.P.E.C.T. AND AUDIENCES Before we dive into skill development, we get strategic – and empirical. We will discuss why audience is the first thing to consider in communicating about science, and what it means to be as empirical about understanding audiences as we are about science itself. We will work this morning on activities that help communicators reset the dial from “content first” to “audience first.” It will soon become clear that audiences bring their own ideas to every topic, even if uninformed.
10:15 am	PERSONALIZING THE IMPERSONAL Science communication often focuses on getting the science right, and that’s essential, but a great story also includes people, especially you. This session asks you to ask yourself, why does your research matter to you? Why should it matter to anyone else? In this session we’re asking you to write 75 words that would be an intro to a longer story, preferably about creative science and engineering. But somewhere in these 75 words you have to appear.
12:00	LUNCH
1:00 pm	PLOTTING A LINEAR COURSE THROUGH COMPLEX MULTIFACETED SCIENCE STORIES On most days, your writing flows like a river of perfection of course. But sometimes it doesn’t. No one needs to know that understanding structure can help you start and shape your beautiful science stories.
2:00 pm	UBER PITCH People are busy and it’s a noisy world, filled with delightful distractions. Why should anyone care about the issues on the top of your minds? We will begin by having participants prepare an “uber pitch” that gets people’s attention. Then, we will record each person on videotape presenting their elevator pitch. We’ll discuss what works if you only have one minute to tell your story in a compelling way. This is an exercise in focused storytelling – which is the magic at the heart of all powerful communications.
4:30 pm	WRAP What have we learned today and how can audience-focused science storytelling inspire?