

**Scientific Communication: Essential Presentation Strategies**  
(Philip Hawke, University of Shizuoka Global COE associate Professor)

English is now the international language of science. Any scientist who wants his or her research to be widely known must be able to present it effectively in English, in both written and oral form. Unfortunately, making effective oral presentations in a second language is not an easy task. Not only do such presentations require well-developed abilities in the distinct language skills of writing, speaking, and listening, they also require advanced organizational and rhetorical skills that can be challenging even for native speakers of the language.

This seminar on oral presentation skills has two distinct sections: a brief lecture on the most common problems in each of five main presentation skill areas, and a longer workshop on how to improve one's pronunciation skills.

In the lecture section of the presentation, I give two key pieces of advice for each of the five main presentation skill areas. 1) Regarding **written preparation**, I advise presenters to know their audience well, and to use outline and summary slides. 2) Regarding **slide design**, I advise that they make their slide content easily legible, and that they keep it simple. 3) Regarding **verbal communication**, I advise making a presentation in a “conversational” tone, and doing a “pronunciation analysis.” 4) Regarding **nonverbal communication**, I advise presenters to avoid reading their slides and in so doing increase their eye contact, and to be sure their laser pointer helps rather than hinders understanding. 5) Regarding **question and answer sessions**, I advise presenters to leave their summary slide up during the Q&A session, and to repeat questions back to questioners for confirmation.

In the workshop section of the presentation, I guide participants through a “pronunciation analysis” designed to improve verbal communication skills, one of the most problematic areas for non-native speakers. The analysis offers simple rules for confirming that the appropriate pronunciation is used at each of three linguistic levels. 1) At the **word level**, stress and “sound” errors are covered. 2) At the **phrase level**, differences in the location of stress in adjective phrases and noun phrases are introduced. 3) At the **sentence level**, emphasis is covered, based on distinctions between new versus old information, contrast, and emotional emphasis. The pronunciation analysis is introduced through a concrete example of a presentation text. Participants work through this text with a partner during the workshop. Handouts are also provided so that participants may apply the pronunciation analysis to their own presentations after the workshop.