

Writing and Speaking in Professional Contexts

Professional Development for Researchers in Electrical Engineering

M | LSA ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

WIMS²

The Center for Wireless Integrated
MicroSensing & Systems

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Introduction

With a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering Rowan Atkinson (Mr. Bean) has largely communicated without words; but most of us do rely on language to communicate in our professions.

The motivation for this sequence of 4 sessions is to enable advanced graduate students and post-doctoral researchers in Electrical Engineering, through discussion, taught sessions and practice, to become more confident and skilled writers and speakers in their academic discipline.

Has a Master's Degree
in Electrical Engineering



Becomes a Comedian

Participants

PhD Candidates and Post-Doctoral Researchers in WIMS²,
Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Rationale

Neither of these groups have time to take a full term length course. The format was therefore designed to encourage continuing professional education.

Format of Workshop

4 three-hour sessions tailored to the specific requirements and needs of participants

The workshop has been offered twice – in spring 2016 and fall 2016, and another is planned for winter 2017 for a wider engineering audience.

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Director of Voice and Speech
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Director of the
English Language Institute

Participant Evaluations of the Workshop

Approach

"Having a way to analyze my writing will be very helpful."

"The class gave me a clearer idea about how to systematically organize my thoughts when I write a research paper."

Content and Pacing

"I think the topics covered were amongst those I consider most challenging and important."

"The sessions delivered more than I had hoped for."

"The sessions make full use of the time assigned to them."

"Very good and helpful content."

"This was an excellent class. I really enjoyed the content and your presentation."

Content of Sessions

Session 1: Recognizing and Using Features of Academic Writing

BRING – a research article in your area and an abstract you have written

Content of Session: What is Academic Style?

- Jointly edit in pairs a written text to make it "more academic"
- Work out verb tense usage in different parts of a research article

Session 2: Writing for an Audience (not just for your advisor)

Writing article introductions and reviewing previous research, showing why your work is important, positioning yourself as a member of the club

BRING – an introduction and/or a literature review to a paper you have written

Content of Session: Writing article introductions, Signalling logical relations, How to ace small talk

- Writing Article Introductions (and summarizing previous research)
- Speaking to Your Reader in Your Writing
- How to do small talk in research contexts. Practicing speaking with an important person in your field while eating, holding a wine glass and a plate of hors d'oeuvres.

Session 3: The Fundamentals: Research Pitches

Content of Session: Explaining your work to researchers and 'ordinary' people

BRING – a research pitch

- Work on your pitch with your group members
- Dealing with Question Time

Session 4: Putting it All Together

The content of this final session is dependent on participants' interests.

BRING – a discussion section, results section or conclusion that you have written

The content of the sessions was designed in collaboration with Professor Yogesh Gianchandani and Research Scientists from WIMS², Dr. Scott Green and Dr. Tao Li.



Tal Nagourney



Haoshen Zhu