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Course Descriptions: Professional Development Seminars for Academic Physicians and Scientists

Designed specifically for physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals, these seminars provide clear, practical advice on how to communicate effectively in a variety of written and spoken formats, from grant proposals to grand rounds.

Since 1993 Paul Casella has presented over 3,000 of these seminars and workshops to resident and faculty physicians, pharmacists, scientists, nurses, administrators and other scientific and health care professionals at medical centers and meetings across North America and Europe.

The topics can be tailored to the needs of the department or group and can be given in one-hour to multiple-day time frames. Measurable objectives are available for each course to facilitate continuing education credit approval.

Each seminar is entertaining and focused on the needs of the audience. Participants leave the sessions informed and empowered with strategies and skills immediately applicable to their work.

Writing for Publication

162 hours

A clear and reasoned presentation of ideas is critical to the success of a scientific manuscript. This seminar examines the structures and positions of emphasis in the sentence, paragraph, and sections of the formal study to help authors *authorize* their claims. Includes a test of reasoning that authors can apply to the articles they read and the papers they write.

This session will also address how authors can use a systematic approach to the writing process to improve the content and presentation of their ideas in a manuscript for submission. Includes suggestions about how to address the needs of the reviewers, editors and readers of a journal to improve your chances of publication. Can be tailored to emphasize

- Writing Grant Proposals
- A Writing Workshop
- Writing Effective Personal Statements and NIH Biosketches

Speaking for Success: Strategies for Effective Medical and Scientific Presentations

162 hours

This course reviews how adults learn as a means to examine effective delivery techniques to engage scientific and clinical peer audiences. Provides practical information on how to deliver powerful oral and PowerPoint presentations in the classroom, the conference room, the auditorium, and at the regional or national meeting.

Includes a discussion of voice, inflection, body language, techniques to stimulate interest and involvement, and strategies to help facilitate audience recall of the message. Addresses how to prepare for a presentation, how to manage anxiety, and how to design and use visual aids effectively. Can be designed to include elements of

- Brief Research Talks
- Small Group Teaching Skills
- Focused Presentation Skills Training Individually or in Workshops
- Powerful Posters
- Design and Use of Visual Aids

Writing Grant Proposals

1–3 hours

This course reviews the principles of good grantwriting to produce clear, direct, and compelling proposals. Focuses on understanding the psychology of reviewers and the review process, how to engage readers and facilitate understanding, and how to manage the proposal writing process. Suggests proposal templates. Includes exercises related to specific elements of a scientific proposal, particularly the Specific Aims page.

Provides specific direction on how to best organize and format NIH applications for reader accessibility and impact, including information on

- Assessing an institute or grantor's priorities
- Deconstructing RFAs, application instructions, project descriptions, model grant applications
- Emphasizing the significance, innovation, and health-relatedness of your project
- Facilitating reader accessibility
- Taking advantage of the natural positions of emphasis in the sentence and paragraph
- Designing and integrating clear and purposeful tables and figures
- Using subheadings, numbering systems, and figure legends effectively
- *Telling the story* and using other journalistic conventions
- Selling the idea in an objective way in order to establish and maintain scientific integrity
- Networking with colleagues, collaborators, consultants, mentors, and NIH program officers
- Using the reviewer critique criteria as “sentence starters” for the information you need to include
- Writing an effective and integrated Biographical Sketch that will accompany your application

Writing for Publication Workshop

264 hours

This session is dedicated to examining participants' drafts of their manuscripts for publication and suggesting ways to improve the clarity, writing style and structure of the drafts. The group will also apply a test of reasoning to the conclusions. Emphasis will also be given to what the authors did particularly well, in addition to working on areas that can be improved.

Writing Effective Personal Statements and NIH Biosketches

1 hour

A course that reviews writing strategies that engage readers and help emphasize your story in a personal statement or NIH biosketch. Addresses how to frame your background, present, and your vision in a way that is integrated with your work or the project you propose. Identifies ways to stress the importance and significance of your ideas.

Individualized Consultation with an Editor

30-60 minutes each

A private consultation with a science editor. The participant sends a writing sample in advance and then meets with the editor to receive feedback and ways to improve the clarity, structure, and effectiveness of the writing.

Individualized Presentation Skills Training

30-60 minutes each

A private consultation with a speaking coach. The participant gives a short presentation that is videorecorded. The coach reviews the video with the speaker and offers suggestions to improve the power of the delivery and the presentation of the content. The speaker and coach repeat this process to refine the delivery and emphasize the main points. The speaker keeps the video, which includes the coach's comments.

Presentation Skills Workshop

2-3 hours

Limited to 10–15 participants. Each participant gives a brief presentation that is videorecorded and critiqued—strengths and ways to improve—by a speaking coach. Includes a discussion of inflection, body language, and use of visual aids; techniques to stimulate audience interest and involvement; and strategies to help facilitate audience recall of the message. Participants keep their own video, which includes the coach's comments.

Effective Interview Skills

1 hour

This seminar addresses effective strategies to use before and during interviews, including preparing talking points, examples, stories, and questions. Stresses how to highlight important information and convey it in a memorable way. Includes a focus on body language, inflection and tone, and the overall image you project.

Powerful Posters

1 hour

This course demonstrates the most effective ways to format and present information in a poster. Stresses the options that authors have to emphasize the visual presentation of their information and ideas. Provides direction on developing headings, formatting text, choosing colors, and adjusting the overall layout so that it engages viewers.

The session also addresses ways to facilitate discussion at the poster session itself and how to prepare and deliver a 1-minute overview of a study or program.

Paul Casella, MFA



Paul Casella is a writer, teacher, editor and producer. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Since 1988 Paul has worked with health professionals to improve the clarity and effectiveness of their manuscripts for publication, formal presentations, grant applications, slides, posters, videos, and other media for scientific purposes.

Since 1993 Paul has presented over 3,000 seminars on written and spoken communication skills to physicians, pharmacists, scientists, nurses, administrators and other scientific and health care professionals at medical centers and meetings across North America and Europe. At international meetings Paul coaches speakers on their delivery skills before they present to the society.

A founding member of the Health Care Communications Group, Paul has authored two chapters of their award-winning book *Writing, Speaking, and Communication Skills for Health Professionals* (Yale University Press 2001).

In addition to his work giving presentations, Paul is an adjunct assistant professor and a consultant to the faculty at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, where he leads seminars, edits manuscripts, coaches speakers, and identifies and serves the advanced communication needs of the faculty.

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EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts in English and Writing, The University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, Iowa City, Iowa, 1990

Artium Baccalaurei in English modified with Creative Writing and Film Studies *cum laude*, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1987

CURRENT POSITIONS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2014 Co-author and Lead Editor, Institutional Development Award—Clinical and Translational Research (IDeA-CTR) application from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Coordinated the work of authors and editors to develop and refine the 110-page narrative. Developed various templates, tables, and figures. Responsible for final draft. The IDeA-CTR was awarded July 2016.
- 2009– Adjunct Assistant Professor, Division of General Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa. I facilitate the professional development of principal investigators and physicians, especially their professional writing and presenting skills.
- 2008–10 Adjunct Instructor of Global Health, Department of Global Health, Des Moines University, Des Moines, Iowa. I help design projects and help students record and make meaning of their global health experiences.
- 2006–07 Lead Writer, Institutional Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) application from the University of Iowa. Coordinated the work of authors and editors to develop and refine the 300-page narrative. Developed various templates and tables. The CTSA was awarded October 2007.
- 2003– Consultant, Parenteral Drug Association (PDA), Bethesda, Maryland. Provide technical reviewing and copyediting services for technical reports and articles in the *PDA Journal of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology*.
- 2000– Academic/Scientific Editor/Manager, Office of Faculty Affairs and Development, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa. I lead advanced writing and speaking skills seminars, edit manuscripts and grant applications, and work as a presentation skills coach for the 1000+ faculty of the medical school.
- 1995– Professional Speaker. I have led over 3,000 presentations and seminar for physicians, researchers, and other health care professionals at meetings and institutions across North America and Europe. Currently I lead about 40 seminars a year. Recent clients (since 2010) include Albert Einstein College of Medicine, European Association of Urology, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, Montefiore Hospital, National Institutes of Health, Stowers Institute for Medical Research, Kansas University School of Medicine, and the Young Urologists Association of Russia.
- 1995– Freelance Writer and Editor. Clients include individuals and groups from North America and Europe in academia, industry, educational testing, and finance.
- 1993–95 Medical Writer, Editorial Services, Bayer Corporation—Pharmaceutical Division, West Haven, Connecticut. Designed and lead a variety of writing and speaking seminars for health care professionals; taught written and spoken communication classes to company medical, management, and sales professionals; edited and wrote a journal dedicated to issues in medical speaking and writing; edited for publication physician abstracts and journal articles.

- 1990–93 Adjunct Faculty, Kirkwood Community College, Iowa City, Iowa. Taught *Composition I*, *Introduction to Poetry*, and *Creative Writing* at the Iowa City campus and over a two-way interactive television system; organized and lead student forums.
- 1989–92 Producer and Director, *PTV: Poetry Television*, Iowa City, Iowa. Founded and promoted *PTV*, a video magazine of poetry distributed to 15 educational centers in the US. The programs featured over 300 poets, fiction writers, musicians and artists.
- 1988–91 Producer and Videographer, Media Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Department of Pediatrics, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City, Iowa. Responsibilities included videotaping patients for their clinical records; producing and directing videotapes, audiotapes, and slide presentations for doctors and administrators.

GRANTS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

- 2015 Honorary Faculty Member Certificate, Kansas University Medical Center
- 2013 Member, Board of Directors, Empower Tanzania (www.empowertz.org)
- 2005 Certificate of Recognition, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Iowa
- 2004 Joel A. DeLiza, MD, MS Lectureship, Association of American Physiatrists, February 26
- 2002 Reader, Yale University Press
Solimene Award for Distinction in Medical Communication, American Medical Writers Association, for *Writing, Speaking and Communication Skills for Health Professionals* (Yale University Press, 2001)
- 2001 Certificate of Recognition, University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine, Rio Piedras, PR
- 1990 University Hospital School In-House Production Grant, to fund *Traumatic Brain Injury: The Return to School*, Iowa City, Iowa
Film in the Cities Regional Film/Video Production Grant, to Fund *PTV: Poetry Television*, St. Paul, Minnesota
- 1987 Third Prize, Poetry on Film Festival, San Francisco, California
The Peter D. Smith Student Initiative Award
The Alexander Lainge Memorial Writing Award
A Richter Grant
- 1986 Academy of American Poets Prize
Dartmouth Film Society Grant

PUBLICATIONS

- 2012 Casella P. Review of *Publish and Flourish: A Practical Guide for Effective Scientific Writing*. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available: at <http://www.doody.com>.
Casella P. Review of *English and Reflective Writing Skills in Medicine: A Guide for Medical Students and Doctors*. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available: at <http://www.doody.com>.
- 2011 Casella P. Review of *Presenting at Medical Meetings*. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available: at <http://www.doody.com>.
- 2010 Casella P. Review of *Communicating Science: Professional, Popular, Literary*. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available: at <http://www.doody.com>.
- 2009 Casella P. Review of *Winning the Publications Game: How to Write a Scientific Paper without Neglecting Your Patients*, 3rd ed. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available at <http://www.doody.com>.
Casella P. Review of *How to Write a Paper*, 4th ed. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available at <http://www.doody.com>.

- 2008 Casella P. Review of *How to Publish in Biomedicine: 500 Tips for Success*, 2nd ed. Doody's Review Service (on-line). Available at <http://www.doody.com>.
- 2001 Casella P. Chapter 3, "The Creative Process" and Chapter 8, "Speaking for Success" in The Health Care Communication Group, *Writing, Speaking, and Communication Skills for Health Professionals*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- 2001 Casella PJ. Writing for publication: Strategies to make you a more efficient and effective author. *Carle Select Papers* 2001;44(2):113-116.
- 1983– Poems, essays, and fiction published in *The Seattle Review*, *Mudfish*, *Fine Madness*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Cutbank*, *Plainsongs*, *The Hawai'i Review*, *Pudding*, *Embers*, *Poetry Motel*, *The Boundaries of Twilight: Czecho-Slovak Writing from the New World*, *The Cedar Valley Divide*, *Writing Center Update*, *Bovine Interventions*, *The Oklawaha Review*, and *The New Press*.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 2012 Spent 5 days videotaping local educators and volunteers in 7 rural villages in Northeastern Tanzania as part of my global outreach work for Empower Tanzania. Edited and posted two videos on the Internet to promote awareness of the work Empower Tanzania coordinates: *My Name Is EMPOWER TANZANIA* (4 min, 16 sec), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChSMXwJv8CA>; and *Collecting Amaranth Seeds* (2 min, 38 sec), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztakjq4wz30>.
- 2011 Led 2-day Board of Directors retreat for Empower Tanzania, a non-governmental organization devoted to empowering the people of rural Tanzania in the areas of agriculture, education, health care.
- 2010 Spent 10 days videotaping local educators and volunteers in 10 rural villages as part of my work for Empower Tanzania (<http://www.empowertz.org>). Edited and posted videos on the Internet to promote dissemination of our efforts, for example, *Thank You Song—Palliative Care Volunteers, Mbaga, Tanzania, 2010* (1 min 40 sec), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ztBXuoIDmc>. Visited, presented to, and met with the elders in the Massai community in Ndururu, Tanzania, to begin work on a maternal/child mortality prevention project; see *Ndaruru, Tanzania, Feb 28, 2010* (9 min, 38 sec), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUPN8NyHBUQ>.
- 2008 Developed curriculum and taught communication skills and palliative care concepts in a week-long seminar to 96 care providers including clinical officers (physician assistants), pastors, nurses, nurse assistants, community workers (social workers), and teachers—in Same, Tanzania, through Iowa Sister States, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Southeastern Iowa Synod and South Pare (Tanzania) Diocese, and a PEPFAR grant (The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief). Shot and produced a video of the experience, *Introduction to Palliative Care, Same, Tanzania, March 2008* (14 min, 2 sec), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoVperr2xk0>.
- 2006, 08, 10 Led poetry classes for Kindergarten, 2nd grade, and 4th grade students at Longfellow Elementary School, Iowa City, IA, focusing on haiku, e.e. cummings, and William Carlos Williams, respectively. Included reading, writing, and presenting exercises.