THE ONLINE SCIENTIST

COURSE INFORMATION

Design effective posters & infographics to visualize your research

Trainer: Liesbeth Smit, MSc,

Company: The Online Scientist

Course description

Are you ready to turn your scientific findings into compelling visuals? Join this course and learn how to create infographics, posters, and graphical abstracts that are attention-grabbing, easy to understand, and memorable.

We'll go over important design principles to help you create visual hierarchy, balance, and consistency, as well as show you the necessary tools and resources to produce professional-looking designs. Through real-life examples and actionable tips, you'll learn how to convey your message clearly. This course will help you avoid common blunders and improve your design skills for more effective science communication.

Learning objectives

You will learn about the various ways to write a compelling title that conveys your main message at a glance. By creating clear headings, you'll learn how to organize the narrative of your research. Get familiar with the 9 design principles to create professional designs, including hierarchy, contrast, direction, emphasis, colors, consistency, and white space. You'll analyze examples of good and bad academic designs to understand the best practices and common pitfalls. Additionally, you'll learn how to select and use the best images and icons, explore various online tools and resources, and improve your data visualization skills to create better graphs and diagrams. Finally, you will know how to create inclusive designs and where to look for design inspiration.

This course contributes to the core competence Science Communication

*You will *not* learn how to use specific design software (although you might get some useful tips). You can work in any program you're familiar with, such as PowerPoint, Canva, and Adobe Illustrator.

Instructional method

This course consists of two live sessions with homework in between. In the first session, an interactive workshop you'll you learn the best practices of infographic design. By doing writing exercises and analyzing academic designs, you'll learn the best-practices and which tools and resources you can use. Between sessions you work on a first draft of your infographic, that you bring to the second session. This is a work session where you get personal feedback on your design by the trainer and your peers, and finalize the design while being able to ask questions and discuss your content.

About the trainer

Liesbeth Smit, MSc. Designer & science communicator, The Online Scientist

Liesbeth is on a mission to make science sexy. She creates innovative ways for researchers to present their work by combining graphic design and innovative technology with science communication. After stepping away from her PhD in Nutrition Science in 2012, she co-founded The Online Scientist, and has created dozens of websites, infographics, campaigns, and animated videos. In her workshops, she helps researchers think critically about their impact and design killer infographics, (poster) presentations, and clear graphical abstracts. Her goal is to inspire you to create visual science communication that is attention-grabbing, easy to understand, and memorable.

Group size (min – max)

Minimum 3 (the fewer people, the more personal feedback and help they get)

Maximum 8

Time schedule

Time investment for PhD candidates / time schedule sessions and extra study load in hours (homework)

- 🗓️ Session 1: Interactive workshop where you learn the best practices of infographic design. 3 hours
- 6 hours of homework between sessions to create your first draft that you bring to the second session.
- 🗓️ Session 2: Personal feedback session, where you finalize your design with the help of the trainer. 3.5 hours.

For who is this course?

For all researchers, from PhD students to full professors, no design skills or previous experience necessary. It's best to take this course when you've got a topic you want to communicate about, whether it's the results of your own research, or more generally about your field.

Quality assurance

We've been given this course for over 4 years, based on 14 years of experience in visual science communication (and experience in academia, doing a PhD ourselves). We improve the course after each workshop on participant's feedback and professional evaluations by the host institute.

For this course we've developed multiple resources for participants to use in their design process like the Poster design guidelines (developed together with institutes and conference organizations). Before the workshops, we check to make sure all participants have access to the materials.

During the workshop we use interactive moments to gage participation and level of the participants and adjust the pace of the workshop and give extra personal support when necessary. Between the workshop sessions, we're available for questions and can give support to the participants, so they do not run into problems.

After the workshop we (can) collect feedback via our feedback form, to see where we can improve our workshops, add new tools best-practices and address concerns. We also provide additional resources including reading materials and tutorial videos to help students continue their learning after the workshops.

References from clients and attendees

"It was a pleasure to host you! Lots of positive feedback from the participants. We are looking forward to inviting you again. Thank you for doing such an amazing job helping scientists to communicate efficiently and in fun ways!" - Dr Christina Klose, Early Career Researcher Support, MARUM – Center for Marine Environmental Sciences, University of Bremen

“I can’t love this workshop more. I came to this workshop with a clear goal of preparing my poster for a conference. Just within one day, I already have the first draft of my poster. What’s beyond my expectation was that I not only learned about skills but also attitude towards science communication. I had been into science communication and had little chance to talk about this with people around. Liesbeth is such a a well-matched person to talk to in terms of science communication. My idea of how to put forward science communication got confirmed via the talk with her and the workshop:) and I got inspirations to work further! thank you for this wonderful experience.” - Qingqing Du, PhD student at University of Amsterdam

“You were incredibly enthusiastic, and were able to keep the audience very present and actively listening. The websites with free icons/scientific pictures were super helpful, as well as the tips regarding colour, contrast and copying from other designs. I am very inspired to think more of my designs!” - Marloes, PhD student, UU

“I’m so glad that I participated in the Design workshop at the University of Amsterdam! Liesbeth helped me see how I can convey scientific messages in a clear, engaging and creative way. I left the workshop feeling incredibly inspired, and am looking forward to putting all my newly acquired knowledge to good use!” - Lisa Yu, Data Science Centre

“Thank you Liesbeth! Your teaching was very clear, and the work with you on my own abstract was truly inspiring. I am taking a lot out of this course for all my future science presentations, both as graphical abstracts and as full manuscripts. Your online resources are great, too, and I hope our ways will cross again one day.”

“Liesbeth is a great trainer, she makes the content clear, concise and uses the time very efficiently. I really enjoyed the session, and the 2 week space to work on your own product was perfect to get appropriate useful feedback in the in-person session. She is also good in imparting designer's mindset to her audience. The balance of content - practical exercises was just perfect!”