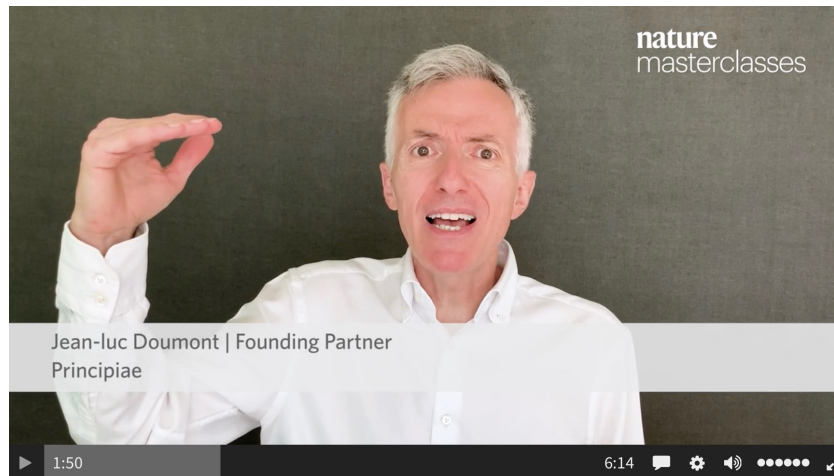


WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER, but no: 2021 was disappointingly similar to 2020, providing us with a window of opportunity of a mere few months for in-person training sessions against a new normal of remote work. The bad news? Hosts and attendees alike love our remote lectures and workshops: same great content, same attention to customization with samples provided by attendees, and an engaging delivery that stands out from that of most people speaking alone in front of a camera, all of it available in the comfort of their own homes. What's wrong with that? Some people now promote remote sessions as preferable for sheer convenience: hosts can avoid the hassle of securing a suitable room and arranging for catering, and attendees can divide their attention between the session and other tasks. We believe training is about pushing the participants gently but firmly out of their comfort zone, as a group. Hence, we see it as part of the value we add to keep pushing for in-person sessions—whenever possible.



In 2021, we were delighted to be asked to work with Nature again on their educational endeavors—specifically their new masterclass titled *Advancing your scientific presentations*. In a dozen or so video segments, Jean-luc shares his expertise on research talks, slide decks, and smooth delivery.

We do not endorse all guidelines within this masterclass, mind you, but we were happy to contribute to it somehow (even if we wish it were accessible free of charge).

We were so happy to travel again and run in-person sessions for GSK, KU Leuven, UHasselt, and VIB in Belgium, Hochschule Niederrhein in Germany, ICFO in Spain, and Lund University in Sweden. In some cases, participants had to wear masks (and bring their own snacks), but these constraints did not hurt the interaction or sense of togetherness—it just made it harder for us to recognize people, especially if these were wearing their hair differently from one meeting to the next. (For interactive sessions, we indeed make a point to know each participant's name as soon as they enter the classroom.)

In each of the above in-person sessions, we were also thrilled to be reunited with familiar faces (or at least eyes and voices), whether hosts of or participants in previous sessions of ours, or, as is frequently the case, former participants turned hosts. Some of them had been waiting a long time to bring us over, so we worked with them to make things happen as soon as the sanitary situation offered an opportunity to do so safely.

When remote work was the only option, we made the most of the situation again in our lectures, customized workshops, and one-on-one tutorials. The rapidly changing conditions even obliged us to adapt the format of scheduled programs on short notice, but with a bit of goodwill from all involved (and the experience built over the last two years, of course), the process was remarkably seamless. We were delighted to work (again) for corporations such as Apple, BASF, Engie, Johnson & Johnson, and Seven Bridges; universities in Europe and the US; national laboratories such as Lawrence Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore, and Sandia in the US, TRIUMF in Canada, and IDIBAPS in Spain; and societies such as Global Bioimaging, the American Ceramic Society, and Optica (the former OSA). Besides our usual topics, we were delighted to run sessions again on *Running effective meetings* in the corporate world and to develop new ones for targeted occasions, notably *Selling yourself in 60 seconds* in preparation for a career fair and *Making sense of scales* for a data-visualization audience. 😊

We love to hear from you

We are always happy to hear about your successes, failures, or frustrations with what you have learned in our sessions. Those many e-mails out of the blue that go “hey, you don’t know me, but I attended a lecture you gave and tried hard to do everything you recommended, and now I won an award for it” are perhaps the most heartwarming part of our job, besides helping us convince the skeptics out there that our approach is effective—and well received. By all means, keep these stories (and others) coming.

Also, if you’d like us to lecture or run workshops at your organization, it is never too early to write to us and explore options or make tentative plans. Never hesitate to let us know what’s on your mind.

In general, e-mail is the best channel to get in touch with us (plain old e-mail—not LinkedIn messages or other social media). Once in our e-mail pipeline, your note will not easily be overlooked or forgotten. (Should we seem slow to reply, send us a reminder: your initial mail might not have reached our inbox.)

On the other hand, if you have a follow-up question about a lecture or a workshop, or more generally if you are seeking advice on a specific challenge, a better forum to post your request is our LinkedIn discussion group named *Trees, maps, and theorems*. In this way, our answers benefit a larger number; moreover, other members of the group may have valuable suggestions to offer about your question.



Principiæ

Structuring thoughts