

STORY STUDIO

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR RESEARCHERS

WITH JONATHAN MCCREA

Every organisation has a story worth telling.

WHIPSMART MEDIA

STORY STUDIO

THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE RESEARCH HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT.

Whether you're telling your story to the public, stakeholders or potential funders, it's crucial to first understand how **we connect as people.**

Learn how to use **engaging language**, turn your knowledge, data and experience into **powerful stories** and really **connect with your audience**.

This is Story Studio

For **8 years**, Story Studio has trained **more than 1,200 researchers and academics** at **over 40 medical research and academic institutions** in Ireland, the UK and Europe, as well as **more than 30 industry clients**. That includes **over 700 researchers** trained for Research Ireland (formerly Science Foundation Ireland).

COURSE CONTENT

STORY STUDIO is a short course for researchers looking to improve their overall communication skills. It draws on communication research, media experience and real-life case studies. It is a highly practical series, incorporating video, imagery, polls and group discussion for an engaging participant experience.

STORY STUDIO is delivered by Whipsmart Media in three sessions, one week apart to allow participant project work. It can be delivered online, hybrid or in a single full day (in-person). Participants will be invited to use their own material to script new soundbites, create stories, develop messaging and structure presentations.

EPISODE 1
LANGUAGE

- Communications Principles
- Visual, Emotional and Logical Communication
- Communicating Difficult Ideas
- Bringing Data to Life

EPISODE 2
STORY

- Science and Theory of Story
- Storytelling Skills
- Story Structure
- Creativity in Story
- Messaging
- The Pyramid Principle

EPISODE 3
AUDIENCE

- Presentation Planning
- Audience Adaptation
- Engaging with a live audience
- Non-verbal cues
- Delivery technique
- Active Listening

DELIVERY

Three sessions, one week apart: online, hybrid or a single full day in person

GROUP SIZE

From 6 to 22 participants

TAILORED

Course content customised after a client briefing call

PORTAL

A year's access to the Story Studio Portal for every participant

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

01 Identify visual, emotional and logical language and apply each appropriately when describing their own research.

02 Translate complex or technical concepts into language accessible to non-specialist audiences.

03 Present quantitative data in a form that is meaningful and memorable to the intended audience.

04 Formulate a single-sentence statement of the purpose and significance of their research.

05 Apply narrative structures (Problem, Inspiration, Payoff; Past, Event, Present) to presentations, funding applications and interviews.

06 Construct a structured message plan comprising one objective, three key messages and supporting evidence for each.

07 Adapt a core message for different stakeholders, including funders, reviewers, policymakers, the media and the public.

08 Employ recognised techniques for responding to difficult questions in panel, conference and media settings.

09 Demonstrate effective delivery, including the use of non-verbal communication and active listening.

COURSE DETAILS

TARGET AUDIENCE	Doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers, principal investigators, clinician researchers and research support staff. No prior training is required.
PREPARATORY WORK	Participants are asked to bring material from their own research, such as an abstract, presentation or funding proposal.
FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT	Vitae Researcher Development Framework, Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact.

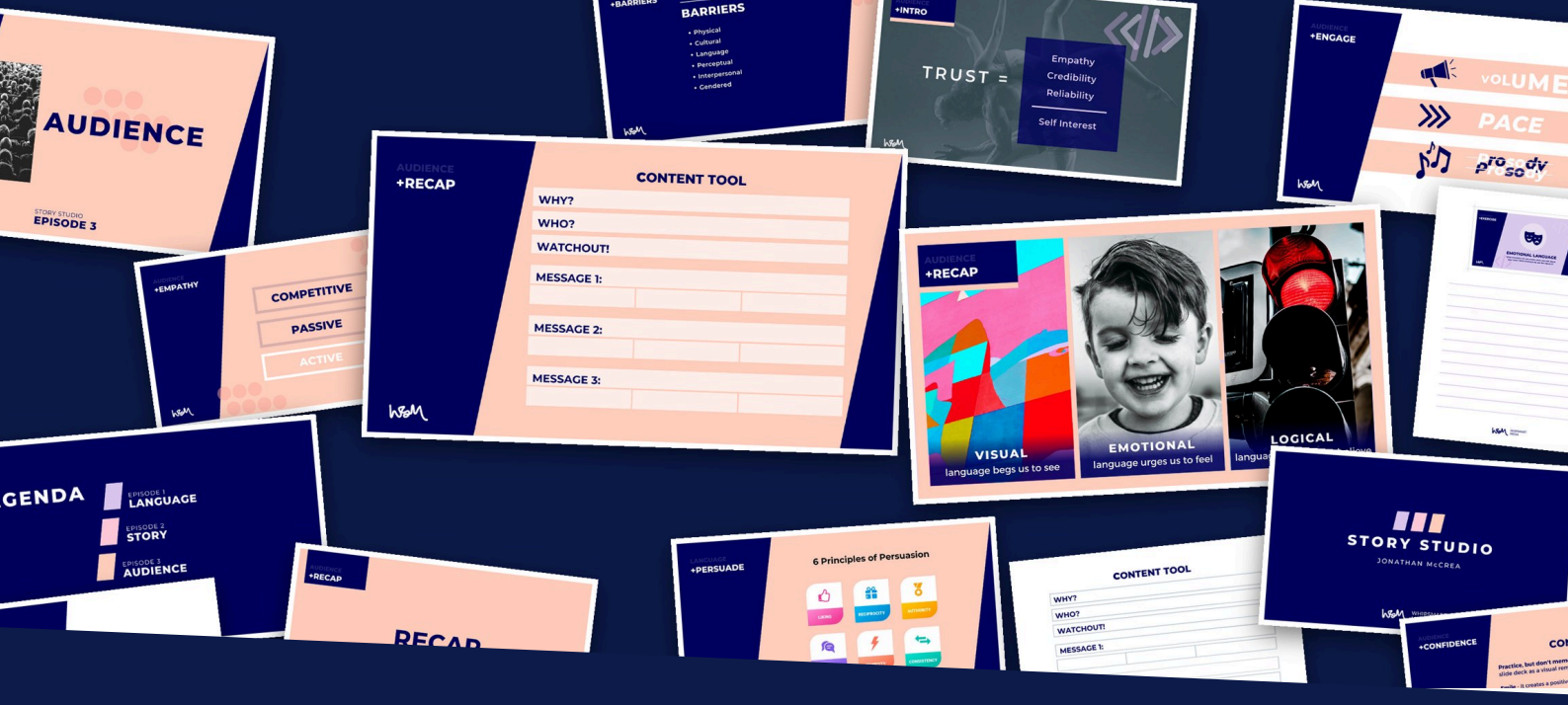
FOR PARTICIPANTS AND INSTITUTIONS

BENEFITS

- Clearer, more authentic interactions for **better outcomes** with teams, media, audiences, stakeholders and funders.
- Learn how to build stories about your career, your research and your institution and craft messages that **further your goals.**
- **Share experience and best practice** across your team to raise the level of interaction and **harmonise external communication**.
- Develop **better public-speaking, persuasion and presentation skills**.
- Gain access to **tools and learning materials** to strengthen your communication skills.
- **Boost confidence** through development of personalised content and start to tell your own stories better.



COMMUNICATION IS A SKILL, NOT A TALENT.



ONLINE LEARNING HUB

THE STORY STUDIO PORTAL

The course comes with a year's access to the Story Studio Portal, an online hub that reinforces course learning, allowing participants to dig deeper. Participants can revisit each episode, practise with AI tools built on the course, and download the handbook, worksheets and content planning tool.

METAPHOR GENERATOR

Describe your work and get fresh metaphors from everyday life that make it instantly understandable.

STORY STRUCTURE COACH

Input a rough story and see it restructured into PIP and other story formats, with coaching notes.

CONTENT TOOL

Build your 13-item communication plan with AI coaching at every step.

LANGUAGE ANALYSER

See which parts of your writing use visual, emotional or logical language, with suggestions to strengthen the balance.

PRISMING TOOL

Discover different perspectives from which to tell your story: patients, funders, communities and more.

INTERVIEW PREP COACH

Get likely questions for your topic, plus blocking and bridging responses.

DOWNLOADS

The Story Studio Handbook, episode learning guides, the Story Studio Worksheet, the printable Content Tool and the How to Be Interviewed guide.

TESTIMONIALS

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“STORY STUDIO IS NOT A STANDARD COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING PROGRAMME. I HAVE SEEN RESEARCHERS WHO WERE INITIALLY HESITANT TO GET INVOLVED, OR WHO USED TOO MUCH TECHNICAL INFORMATION IN THEIR COMMUNICATIONS, DEVELOP THE CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK WITH GREATER CLARITY, ENGAGEMENT AND ENTHUSIASM.”

CATRIONA BOYLE, SENIOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION OFFICER, TEAGASC

“The training was an extremely valuable use of my time. It increased my confidence, the structure of my talk and how I communicate my science.”

PROF LYDIA LYNCH, HARVARD AND TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

“I was able to answer the questions with confidence, even when the reviewers were tough. The training was incredibly helpful for the interview but I will also use the learnings to communicate my science better in general.”

ASSOC PROF, UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY, POST ERC INTERVIEW

“The course gave me the confidence to accept the offer to do the lecture. I had only hoped that your course would improve my communication skills, I had never considered it would develop my leadership skills.”

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

“The training was brilliant. I am delivering a president's address tomorrow and am going to use a story in my speech, thanks to you.”

ASSOC PROF, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, RCSI

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

9 of 10
would recommend the course to a colleague

9 of 10
rated the trainer's knowledge and expertise 5 out of 5

10 of 10
preferred the multi-session format to a single full day

From a post-course evaluation of a Story Studio cohort (10 respondents).

SELECTED CLIENTS

Taighde Éireann Research Ireland
RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences
Trinity College Dublin, Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath, The University of Dublin
UCD Dublin
Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway
MTU Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan Munster Technological University
Teagasc Agriculture and Food Development Authority
British Council

ABOUT THE TRAINER

JONATHAN MCCREA



Jonathan McCrea is an award-winning science and technology broadcaster, communications specialist and entrepreneur with extensive experience working across science, medicine, research, public engagement and emerging technology.

He is the founder of Whipsmart Media, a communications consultancy specialising in the science and medical sectors, where he works with researchers, clinicians, scientific organisations and companies to communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively.

As a broadcaster and journalist, Jonathan has spent much of his career translating complex scientific and technological subjects for wider audiences. He presents Newstalk's Futureproof and has presented science programming for RTÉ and other broadcasters.

In 2024, Jonathan founded Get Started With AI, through which he advises and trains organisations on the practical use and implications of artificial intelligence. His particular interests include responsible AI, communicating uncertainty and evidence, public trust in AI, and improving how researchers and scientific organisations engage with patients, policymakers and the wider public.

RECOGNITION

25

national and international awards for science broadcasting

Fellowship, Atlantic Technological University
Awarded in 2022 for contribution to science communication

New York Festivals Radio Awards
Three wins and a Silver at the international "Oscars of radio"

Specialist Speech, national radio awards
Six wins (PPI and IMRO), most recently in 2026

European Science TV and New Media Festival
Gold award

SCI:COM
Co-founder of Ireland's science communications conference.

PRECISION ONCOLOGY IRELAND (POI2)
Member of the Governance Committee.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE IRELAND
Member of the advisory board.

FEES AND BOOKING

COURSE FEES

Fees are charged per participant and scale with group size, so the course is accessible to smaller research groups as well as full cohorts.

FULL COHORT	SLIDING SCALE	SMALL GROUP, MINIMUM 6
€220		**€450**
per participant, for a group of 22		per participant, for a group of 6

The fee includes all three episodes, the briefing call and debrief, the course handbook and twelve months of Story Studio Portal access for every participant. Discounts are available for multiple bookings.

DELIVERY TIMELINE

PREPARATION

Preparation and Consultation: 1 hr client briefing call to identify key learning objectives and customise course content for increased relevancy.

DELIVERY

Delivery: Three sessions, one week apart to allow participant project work, delivered online, hybrid or in a single full day (in-person).

DEBRIEF

Debrief: 30 min client debrief. Every participant keeps a year's access to the Story Studio Portal.

CONTACT

Jonathan McCrea
jonathan@whipsmartmedia.com
www.whipsmartmedia.com

WHIPSMART MEDIA
© 2026