

OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2018 were characterized by diversity—not just in gender or ethnicity of our audiences (as always), but also in age, professional background, and type of organization (universities and research institutions, corporations, and not-for-profit societies), and in topics addressed, not to mention locations. To anchor concepts covered by Jean-luc, Geneviève facilitated a record 40 practice sessions on oral presentations in Belgium and abroad, thus helping 200 researchers, consultants, managers, and others sharpen their speaking skills. She also provided detailed feedback on 120 pieces of writing, all on different topics, and—together with Jean-luc—on another 120 graphs of equally diverse data sets.

Universities and research institutions constituted once again a main segment among our clients. In 2018, we were invited to address researchers on 40 campuses in eight countries.

Next to our long-standing programs at Belgian universities, Jean-luc traveled a record eight times to the United States this year, to lecture at both faithful clients who bring us in every year, such as MIT (30 lectures so far), UC Santa Barbara, USC, U of Michigan, and Indiana U—to name but a few—and new clients, such as UC Riverside and CSU Channel Islands.

Outside Belgium and the US, we lectured or ran workshops for the first time in 2018 at Universidad de Granada in Spain, Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María in Chile, Universidad del Cauca in Colombia, University of Cambridge in the UK, and Griffith University and Macquarie University in Australia, besides further sessions for the University of Oslo in Norway.



In 2018, we were active in 10 different countries, including Colombia for the first time. In the US, we spoke in 13 states—but mostly in California, Boston, New York City, the Midwest, and Texas. We were glad to return to Chile and to Australia.

Corporations kept us just as busy as universities in 2018. Among new clients, we were delighted to deliver two lectures at Apple in Cupertino and one at Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), and to run a workshop for Warner Bros. in Burbank. Closer to home, we ran training programs for the first time for construction group BESIX and pharmaceutical group UCB, and continued our work for Johnson & Johnson and for GSK. We also ran two sessions for Seqwater in Brisbane (Australia).

Not-for-profit societies involved us mostly at conferences again. In 2018, we delivered keynote or plenary addresses at events of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Graduate Career Consortium (GCC), the European Patent Office, and the Optical Society (OSA). We also ran our usual marathon of workshops for students at SPIE Photonics Europe as well as SPIE Optics + Photonics.

In 2019, we will continue work with our diverse base of clients and, again, welcome a range of new ones. Among universities and research institutions, we will run sessions at the University of Namur in Belgium, Lund University in Sweden, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Italy, and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Saudi Arabia. We will also be adding Arkansas and Tennessee to our US speaking tours, and look forward to returning to Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in Japan, and to running more sessions for national research centers in the US. We are currently discussing longer training programs with several universities in South America as well—more opportunities for us to run sessions in Spanish. 😊

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 Facebook messages or similar 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