

# Preface and Acknowledgements

I became interested in public speaking, particularly as it concerns the communication of scientific facts, early in the course of my academic training. The reasons for that interest were quite diverse, ranging from the suffering exhibited by my colleagues (and me) upon presenting seminars and papers at the university to the disappointment that followed lectures delivered by renowned scientists who seemed to suffer as much as any beginner. I shared my ideas with Dr. Antonio Souto, a specialist in ethology and primatology, whom I profoundly admire to this day. Although he agreed with me on several points, he commented that perhaps the main problem was not with public speaking but with scientific writing. Twenty years went by, and now, I think that both of us were right.

I believe that writing and speaking in public are two significant skills that anyone aspiring to an academic career should learn and develop. The reason is that science is a universal enterprise, and as such, it is based on communication as the main strategy to structure and establish itself. As a consequence, and taking my own shortcomings into account, I decided to meet the challenge and write on this subject. First, I wrote a basic text as support material for a short course I taught my colleagues at a master program in plant biology. That text was the result of a challenge posed by my friends and colleagues, the biologists Delmira Costa Silva, Gardene Maria de Sousa, and Valdeline Atanázio da Silva, which led me to put the ideas occupying my mind into writing. While still a master's student, I sought to refine that first version and offered to teach a course on Basic Scientific Public Speaking to broader audiences.

I have been teaching basic courses regarding the public communication of scientific facts (scientific public speaking) on a steady basis ever since. The present book summarizes the content of those courses and is an augmented translation of the third Portuguese edition published in Brazil. The present version in English follows the same basic plan I devised when I was an undergraduate student to produce a light, quick, and practical introduction to the intended subject. I honestly expect, dear reader, that this booklet will help you face the challenges posed by academic public speaking. My intention

was to compile information in a concise and objective manner to help anyone who needs to speak correctly and coherently about science as well as to apply such information to his or her professional practice. After 20 years of teaching courses on public speaking, I have met many different types of professionals and students seeking to improve their speech skills. The present book was revised and slightly augmented to include suggestions made by students and colleagues. Upon the request of my editor at Springer, I added a few notes regarding online resources that might be useful for public speaking.

A debt of gratitude is owed to many people who helped make this book possible. Thanks are due to Eric Stannard, editor at Springer, for supporting the proposal. I am especially grateful to the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) for financial support in the form of scholarships for scientific productivity given to me.

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