



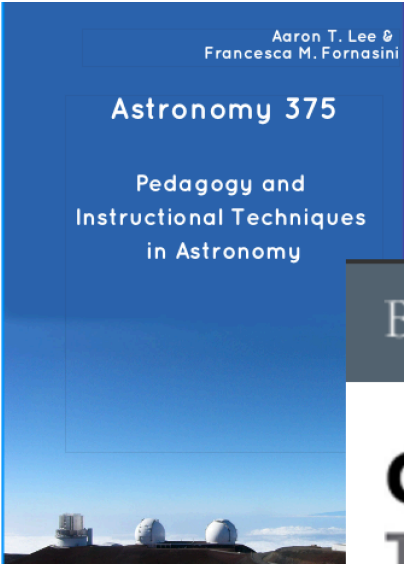
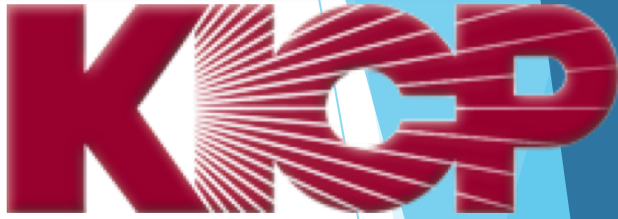
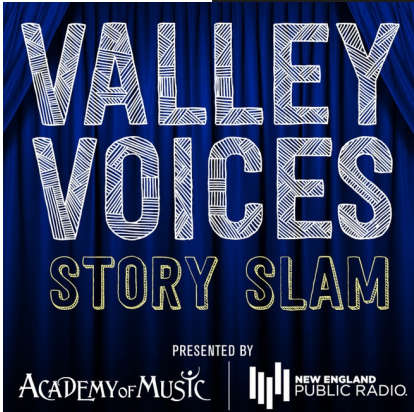
# Improv for Scientists: Connecting with your audience

GSPS, UT Austin

March 2018



Alan Alda Center  
for Communicating Science  
AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

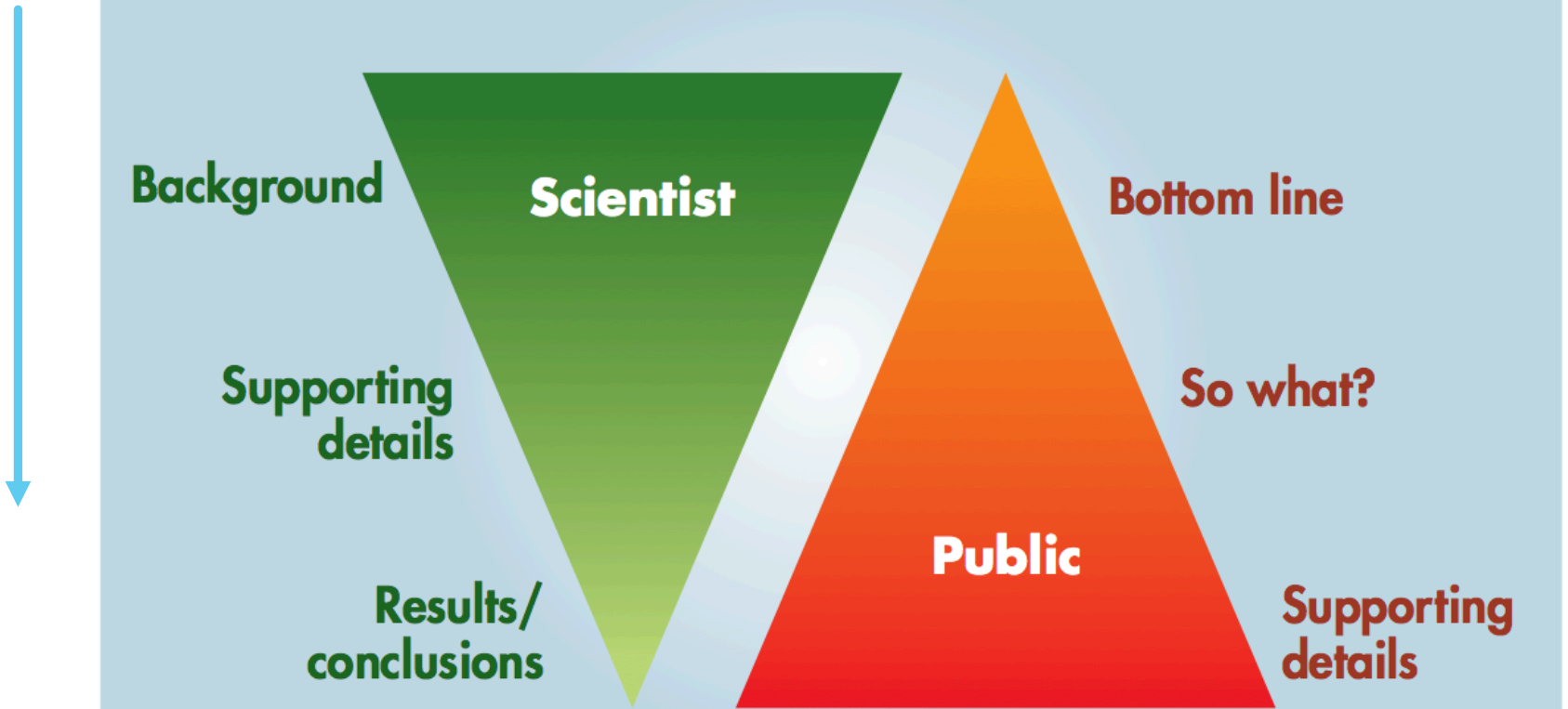


Berkeley Graduate Division  
**Graduate Student Instructor**  
TEACHING & RESOURCE CENTER

VIDEO: Talk Nerdy To Me - *Melissa Marshall*

[https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa\\_marshall\\_talk\\_nerdy\\_to\\_me](https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_marshall_talk_nerdy_to_me)

Time



**Figure 3. Scientists can communicate** more effectively with the public about climate change by inverting the pyramid of their usual presentations to colleagues. That is, start with the “bottom line” and tell people why they should care.

# Tossing A Ball Exercise



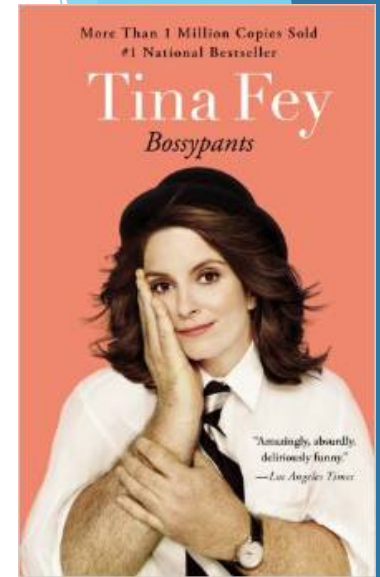
“The first rule of improvisation is **AGREE**”

“Respect what your [students have] created”

“Not only to say yes, but **YES, AND**”

“Make [personal] statements”  
(Don’t ask questions all the time)

“There are no mistakes, only **OPPORTUNITIES.**”



# Five questions

Who is the audience?

Are you bringing the audience along with you?

Are you taking responsibility?

What is your story?

Can you make it a conversation?

# Mirror/Mirror Exercise





VIDEO: Brain, As Explained by John Cleese:

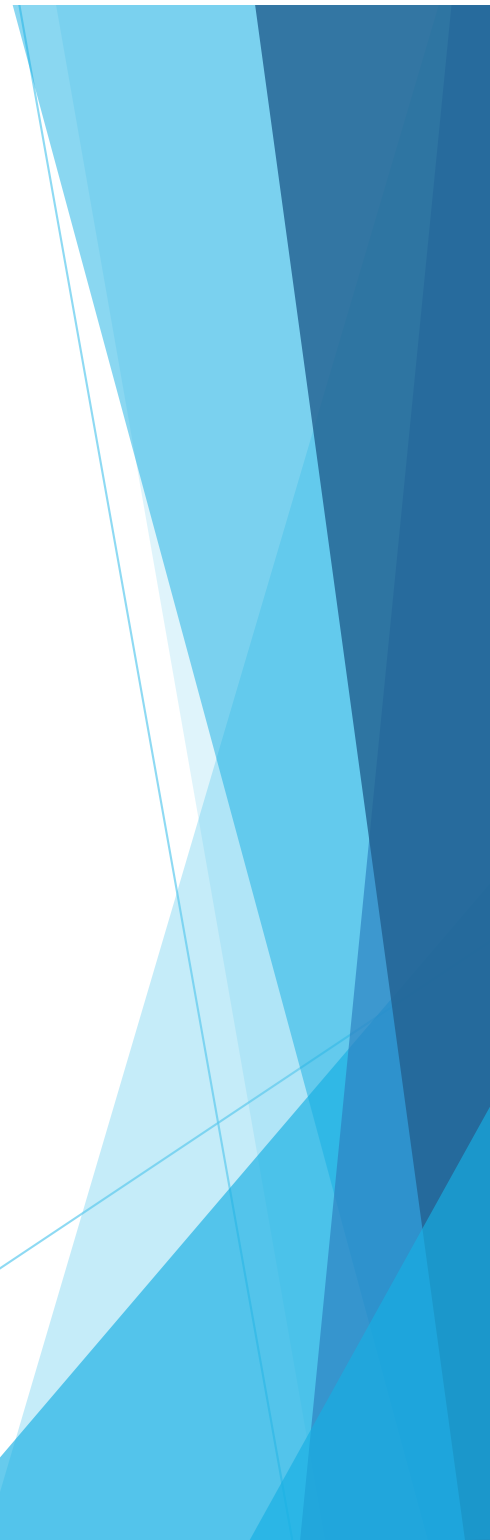
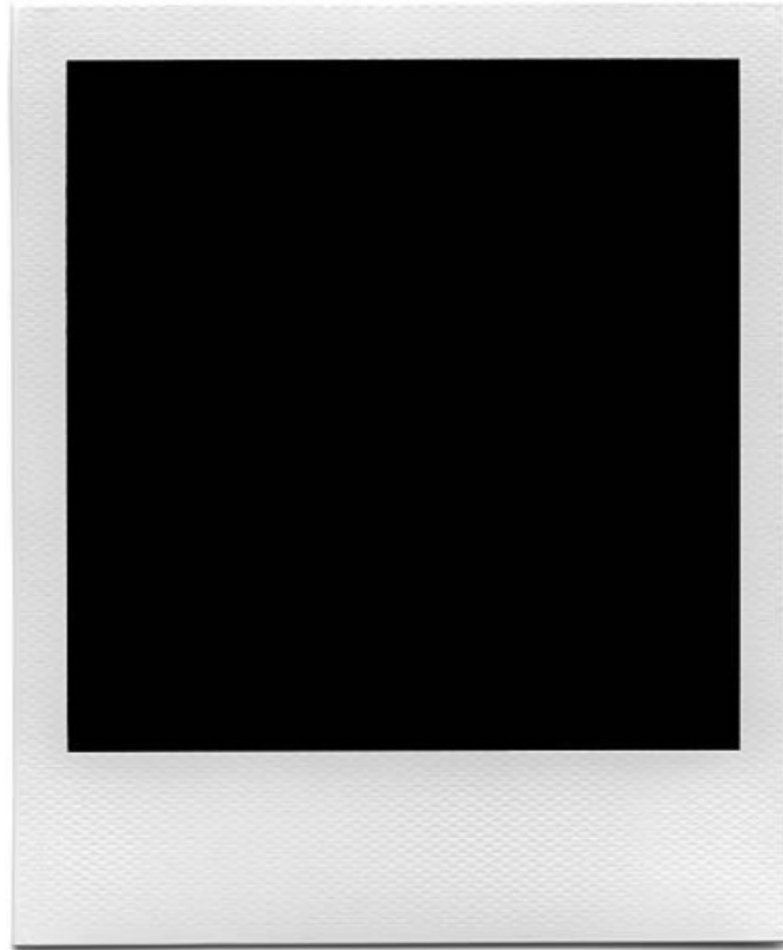
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQjgsQ5G8ug>

# Time Traveler Exercise

- ▶ Groups of 2. Decide who is “Player 1” and who is “Player 2.”
- ▶ Player 1 will be a ‘time traveler’ that has been suddenly transported from the 1700’s (pre-US civil war).
- ▶ Player 2 is a 2018 native.
- ▶ The native is expecting a call soon on their cell phone. Explain to the time traveler what is about to happen, so they don’t panic.

- ▶ Player 2 is now the time traveler.
- ▶ Player 1 is now the 2018 native.
- ▶ During the space-time journey, the time traveler broke their arm. The native needs to explain to the time traveler how the nearby X-ray machine can be used to help mend the arm.

# Blank Photo Exercise



# Five questions

Who is the audience?

Are you bringing the audience along with you?

Are you taking responsibility?

What is your story?

Can you make it a conversation?