

There are three main communication skills that students will learn through the process of doing lab work in Junior Lab. The main one is doing oral presentations, the type of talks that somebody would give at a conference. A typically 12 to 15 minute type, professional level talk, with some sort of-- usually with electronic slides, like a PowerPoint or something like that.

The second one is we write papers. They write papers in the style of the Physical Review Letters, which is more or less the most important journal in physics. It's a very constrained format. It's a maximum of four pages, two columns. It's written for a generalist physicist audience. So it's somebody who's your professional peer, but may not be working in your direct research field. So writing a Physical Review letter is a-- it's a challenge both as a writer and as a researcher. So the students get a lot of practice in that over the course of 8.13.

The third mode of communication which students will get a lot of practice with in the course of doing lab work in 8.13 is just communicating with a peer. Working as part of a team, learning to listen to what your partner is saying and understand what they mean by that. Learning to be patient with people, learning to explain yourself in live time with somebody that you're trying to cooperate with to achieve some goal. Having to make decisions. Having to negotiate decisions, when you think the most important measurement to make is this and your partner thinks the important measurement to make is that. Working through those sort of interpersonal types of communication. They get lots of practice for that, whether they like it or not.