

#FAMELAB THAILAND
TALK LIKE A FAMELABBER - DR. TAWIN IEMPRIDEE

MEET ONE OF THE TOP TEN FAMELABBERS 2016

CAN IT REALLY BE AS EASY AS THAT SOUNDS? HOW CAN WE 'TALK LIKE FAMELABBERS'? HOW CAN YOU COMMUNICATE THE SCIENTIFIC FACTS AT THE HEART OF FAMELAB? HERE ARE A FEW SECRETS TO COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY:

"COMMUNICATING SCIENCE TO THE PUBLIC IS A GROWING PRIORITY FOR RESEARCHERS WORLDWIDE. BY DOING SO, THEY NOT ONLY CHANGE THE COMMON STEREOTYPE OF THE SCIENTIST AS 'THE GEEK IN THE WHITE LAB COAT', BUT ALSO JUSTIFY FUNDING FOR THEIR RESEARCH AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS."

DR. TAWIN JOINED THE COMPETITION LAST YEAR AND MADE IT INTO THE TOP GROUP OF TEN FINALISTS. LET'S HEAR FROM HIM ABOUT WHY HE DECIDED TO TALK ABOUT BATS, AND WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT FAMELAB'S MASTERCLASS

1. PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF

I've always liked and been interested in living things for as long as I can remember. When I was a child, I loved reading science comics, watching documentaries about animals, and seeing animals in the wild. However, what really inspired me to become a scientist was the movie 'Jurassic Park' – it was the first time I learned about DNA and genetic engineering. From that point I was determined to become a scientist so that I could modify genes, just like in the movie, and I eventually went to study at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA for my Bachelor's and Master's degrees, until I finally graduated with a PhD in Cancer Biology. Currently, I am a researcher for NANOTEC, at the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA). My main roles are to help solve the mystery of cancer, and try to develop ways to detect cancer in the blood. My dream is to be able to help reduce the number of deaths among Thai people from this dangerous disease.

2. TELL US ABOUT THE TOPIC YOU PRESENTED AT FAMELAB 2016 – 'BATMAN'. WHY YOU TALK ABOUT IT?

The topic I chose to present was 'the miracle of bats'. I think many people already know great things about bats, such as their ability to fly, use of ultrasound to find their way and catch prey, or even the ability of vampire bats to detect heat. However, there still remains one more mystery for scientists – how do bats, which are carriers of several dangerous viruses like Ebola, rabies, SARS and the Nipah virus, survive with these viruses without suffering from them? Scientists around the world are trying to solve this mystery and have discovered that bats have a special immune system which is different from that in other animals. If we can solve this mystery, we may be able to find a cure for all kinds of viruses. This is why I chose to present this topic in the FameLab competition.

3. HOW DID THE MASTERCLASS CHANGE THE WAY YOU COMMUNICATE SCIENCE?

FameLab's MasterClass has certainly changed the lives of all the FameLabbers, indeed. Besides various communication techniques, we also learned to identify exactly what science communicators are, the roles we have, and what we should pay attention to when communicating science. Our job is not only to provide information and knowledge, we have to try to grow the seed of interest in science in the audience, making them see that science is all around them, is fun, and is important. However, we won't be able to achieve this if we cannot grab the audience's attention. You learn many 'miracle techniques' in FameLab's MasterClass. I would strongly recommend everyone to apply for FameLab this year and strive to reach the final round, when the top 10 speakers will also be able to join a MasterClass. I can guarantee that the experience you gain from MasterClass and FameLab will change your life forever.