Communicating Science

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“For science to work, communication is essential” - Rush Holt, Former AAAS CEO

“Use soft words and hard arguments”
- English Proverb

Why is science communication important to you?

There are many ways that we use communication as scientists – what does ‘science communication’ mean to you?

“Communication is not an add on - it is central to your enterprise as scientists” - Nancy Baron, Leaving the Ivory Tower

Deficit model of Science Communication
A first step: Getting better at what we SAY

Convey the “so what” about your science to:
- Policymakers
- Managers
- Stakeholders
- Other scientists
- Journalists
- Community members
- Public(s)

As scientists, we are trained to talk about:
- Materials, methods, statistics, setting
- The ‘so what’ is buried somewhere in here…
- Research results
- “Take home” message

Journalists are trained to report on the big take home message first, then the details.

First, fill out your message box based upon a story you could talk to the media about (10 minutes)

Then we’ll work in partners (10 minutes)

Second step: Honing our LISTENING skills
Other ways that you/ your students might use the Message Box technique?

- Preparing for conferences
- Planning out an outline for a paper
- Planning key points for a meeting/committee to discuss
- Student presentations in class

Psychology of Science Communication

Research by E. Markowitz, M. Nisbet & Yale Climate Change:

- Put people first
- Consider moral foundations and human values as an access point

"Linking climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to positive emotions such as hope, pride and gratitude may allow individuals to circumvent the need for defensiveness, leaving them willing and able to engage more actively." Markowitz 2012

Plan ahead for opportunities to engage

Are there papers, projects, conferences or other events that will provide you an opportunity to speak to the media, give a public talk, or brief policymakers?

What are the pros/cons of these engagement opportunities? What do you worry about? Will you get ‘credit’ from your university for spending time on these events?

Are there examples to look at of people who have excelled at communicating science in your field – what can you learn from them?

Special considerations:
Resources we recommend

- *Escape from the Ivory Tower*, Nancy Baron
- *Message Box Workbook*, COMPASS
- SciComm trainings by COMPASS, AGU, AAAS, Alan Alda / Kavli

UpGoer Five Example

Extra/optional slides

For climate change, the Six Americas:

Where is your time best spent? Where do you target your engagement?
Checklist for an interview

- Message box
- Ask questions - when is the deadline, who is the audience, what is the format?
- Set out your research paper, figures, reports
- Compile a list of other recommended sources for the journalist
- Anticipate the 'hard' questions and prepare an answer
- Practice your bridging techniques