FINDING YOUR VOICE: COMMUNICATING THE CRITICAL ROLE OF POSTDOCS ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Hudson H. Freeze, PhD
Yvette R. Seger, PhD
Session Learning Objectives

- Learn about the key components of an effective message
- Utilize improvisational techniques to hone communication skills
- Develop brief “elevator speeches” to convey the role of postdocs and challenges faced by the postdoc community
- Practice, practice, practice!
What makes a message effective?
Effective Messages:

- Use simple language
- Are descriptive
- Are relatable to your audience
- Engage your audience
Tell a Story

“If you’re not at the table, you’re probably on the menu”
Jeremy Berg, President ASBMB, Experimental Biology 2014

“Your best story beats your best data”
—Francis Collins, NIH Director, Conference call 2012.

“Tell them a story. They understand stories. It’s what got them elected”
Congressman Rush Holt PhD, at the Golden Goose Awards, 2013, now CEO at AAAS

“I don’t understand what you guys talk about and neither do my friends”
T. Denny Sanford, philanthropist, personal conversation.

“It's time to assume your power, and shoulder your responsibility to get your message to the waiting world. It’s nobody's job but yours. And nobody can do it as well as you can”
Michael Crichton, American Association for the Advancement of Science, January 1999
Really important

Gaining trust as well as respect in communicating to motivated audiences about science topics

Susan T. Fiske\(^1\) and Cydney Dupree
Interactive Example #1

Describe what a postdoc is
Topic Brainstorming
Postdoc Specific Messaging

Determined by group:

- Federal Research Funding (1 group)
- Salary/benefits for postdocs (1 group)
- Communicate the value-add of postdocs (distinguishing the role of the postdoc?) (1 group)
- Importance of doing stuff outside of lab (all three groups)
Planning Your Elevator Speeches

- Identify the key points to convey about the topic/issue (5’)
- Identify descriptive, plain language to convey your message (5’)
- Practice your messages! They should be 90 seconds to 2 minutes (10’)

FASEB
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Wrap-Up

- What did you find most challenging about this exercise?

- What surprised you about this exercise?
“Postdocs: Turning grant dollars into results”
Thank You!

Yvette R. Seger, PhD
FASEB Office of Public Affairs
yseger@faseb.org