



Media training Engage with the public

Why engage the public?

Theory and discussion

1. Reasons to communicate with the general public

- service provider arguments (a and b)
- instrumental arguments (c and d)

a. The social cultural argument.

Scientific literacy; schooling the illiterate. To feel at home in society, you need to understand something of science. Otherwise you risk feeling or being excluded from this society.

b. The political argument

The scientification of our society has led to knowledge of science being a precondition of democratic decision making. For example:

- Creating a framework for political decisions
- Citing experts in the media

c. The practical argument

Most important areas where more knowledge is required

- Health (medical and mental)
- Food

The public feels a need to know something about science, specifically to support important choices concerning individual health.

d. The economic argument

Knowledge and innovation provide a competitive edge in the current economy. There is a need for 'human capital'. Enough people need to be trained in the sciences.

Moreover, there is a great interest among the public, apparent through:

- Visits to science centres
- Visits to museums with scientific information
- Sales of popular science magazines such as KIJK



2. Who communicates about science and why?

Individual scientists

- Pleasure
- Having something to say
- Influencing policy
- Good publicity
- Seeking recognition for the own field of expertise
- Duty towards the tax payer

Science critics (journalists, philosophers)

- Inform the public's views on science

Science organisations (in England BA), VNCI, NWO, KNAW

- Promote the interests of academic pursuit
- Attract beta students

Institutions and companies (universities and research bodies)

- Fundraising
- Student recruitment
- Influencing policy, etc.

Media

- Science is new, and news

3. Two models for scientific communication

- *deficit model*: the public has a deficit of knowledge concerning science, the public is passive.
- *interactive model*: an exchange of knowledge takes place between science and society, the public is active.

4. Do you want to read more about this?

Wetenschappers in beeld - van youtube tot talkshow (2014), Jeanine de Bruin en Lennart Wesel. Boom-Lemma uitgevers, Den Haag (in Dutch).



Criteria for Giving Feedback

- Make sure your comments are intended to help the recipient
- Keep positive feedback and critical feedback in balance
- Describe what the person is doing and the effect the person is having
- Be specific, not general (use clear and recent examples)
- Give feedback when the recipient is open to accepting it
- Give suggestions for change
- Include only things the receiver can do something about
- Give the other person room to react

Criteria for Receiving Feedback

- Don't be defensive
- Seek specific examples
- Be sure you understand (summarise)
- Share your feelings about the comments
- Do not give feedback in return
- Ask questions to clarify



Assignment radio interview

Please answer the following questions about your research, in two sentences. Use plain English.

What made you enthusiastic about this research?

What important research results would benefit society?

What important scientific result do you expect?

What is the link between your research and current headlines (such as politics, economic situation etc)?

Make a headline (five words max.) for a newspaper article about your research.



Assignment radio interview

Information for the radio interviewer

Name scientist:

Department / University:

Research title:

Short description of your research (two lines):

Note: please give this form back to the trainer as soon as you're done.



Observations radio interview

1. Did you understand the answers of the interviewee?
Why did you / didn't you?

2. Does the interviewee use any jargon?
Can you give an example?

3. Does the interviewee give relevant research information?
What do you miss?

4. What is the effect of the tone of voice and the way of speaking of the interviewee?

5. Did the interviewee make an enthusiastic impression?
What aspects caused that impression?

6. What did the body language of the interviewee tell you?

7. What compliments can you give to the interviewee?

8. What tips for improvement can you give the interviewee?