

# Communicating Research

A Summary of Good Practice<sup>1</sup>

## Five Habits that will make you Better at Everything

1. Communicate in pictures
  - Use visual metaphors to make comparisons to things or experiences that are most familiar to your audience.
  - Schematics of familiar objects can help describe a more complex message.
2. Use the full palette of emotion
  - For example, creating a joyful image can expand focus; a fearful image may narrow understanding. However, using humor with fear can be most effective.
3. Be strategically empathetic
  - Sympathy (feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune) is judgmental; empathy (the ability to understand and share the feelings of another) is not.
  - Must address the intersection between what you care about and what your audience cares about.
  - The goal should not be to raise awareness. It must be more specific and address the subject that matters to the audience. The audience can be just one person. It may be useful to create a description of that audience in specific terms. For example, the Trader Joe's customer is "an unemployed professor who drives an old Volvo".

## The Disconnect Between Science and Public Understanding

- 87% of scientists accept that natural selection plays a role in evolution. **32% of the public agree.**
- 88% of scientists think that genetically modified foods are safe to eat. **37% of the public agree.**
- Just 43% of scientists polled believe it is important to share their work.
- 56% said they would not advance in their careers by sharing their work outside their scientific community.

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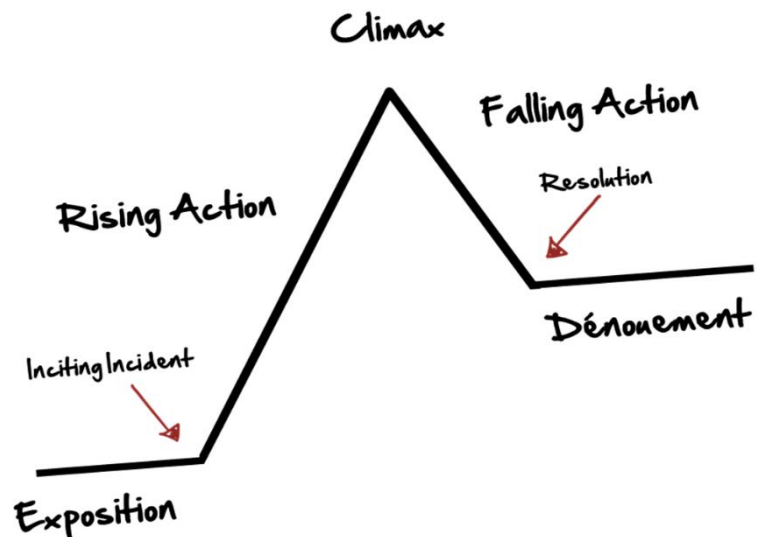
<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Global Fellows Program, Workshop 6: Communicating Your Research. Presented by Ann Christiano, Frank Karel Chair in Public Interest Communications, College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida. April 14, 2017

4. Know what you want people to do
  - Prepare the call to action and be specific.
  - For example, the message to “recycle more” is more effective than “help the environment”.

5. Tell Stories

- Stories need:
  - Structure
  - Vivid details
  - Compelling characters
  - Concrete language
  - Room for your audience
  - Something slightly different than what we say we want

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE STORY



## Communicate your Research

- **What do you want to happen that is not happening now?** List the very specific actions that will have an immediate impact resulting from knowledge gained from your research.
- **Who has to do something that they are not doing?**
- **What would they believe that would make them want to follow your recommendations?**
- **How will you get into their daily experience?**

## Global Fellows

Help us communicate your research

Please share:

- Visuals (Photos, infographics, charts);
- A description of your audience and what they care about;
- Your call to action; and,
- The narrative arc of your research “story”.