Science Communication for Plant Breeding Tips

How to write a blog on your research?

1. Keep things short. A good length for a blog post is 500 to 800 words.

2. The primary audience for this blog is the general public. So:
   - Start with the question (the one assigned), and make sure your conclusion addresses the question again
   - Keep your explanations simple
   - Don’t worry about being an absolute subject-matter expert. Being relatable is the most important factor in blogging
   - Avoid technical terms and jargon
   - Use a conversational, informal tone
   - Write with examples for your points whenever you can
   - Use concrete, specific language in your post
   - The goal is for the post to read at the 8th grade level

3. Identify photos to go along with your post, whenever possible, these are more memorable than the text

4. A good way to check the reading level is the hemingway application http://www.hemingwayapp.com/

How to message your research?

1. Keep things short.

2. Follow the message triangle:
   - Key point one (Broad), with up to three supporting sub-points
   - Key point two (Narrow), with up to three supporting sub-points
   - Key point three is the call to action

3. The primary audience is the general public
   - Start with the question and make sure your key point answers this question
   - Keep your explanations simple
   - Avoid technical terms and jargon
   - Use a conversational, informal tone
   - Make sure your examples relate to your key points
   - Avoid tangents that are scientifically interesting but not related to your key point
   - Use concrete, specific language

4. Use data and facts woven into stories to make your message more relatable

Tips for speaking to non-scientific audiences

1. You are more interesting than your science
   - How is science part of your everyday life?
   - How did you come up with the question you were asking?
   - What were the problems associated with doing the experiments?

2. Body Language
   - Speak clearly (usually this means slowing down)
• It is okay to use your hands but don’t flail
• It is okay to move about, but don’t constantly pace

3. Voice
• Changing volume helps you make a point
• Talking speed can help you make a point
• Silence is your friend
• Tone (high or low) can help you make a point

4. The primary audience is the general public.
• Keep your explanations simple.
• Don’t worry about being an absolute subject-matter expert, be able to explain the general concepts
• Avoid technical terms and jargon
• Use a conversational, informal tone
• Have examples for your points whenever you can
• Use concrete, specific language
• The goal is for the post to read at the 8th grade level

5. Identify photos/figures that are general and help tell your story, do not use the figures you would for a science talk or article.

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**The Audience Factor: Tips to remove tension**

*As a speaker everyone desires listeners but also fears the audience. It important to understand that what one perceives to be the audience and what the audience actually is will change a speaker’s stress level*

1. **Audience factors to consider**
   - **Size**
     - Think of the talk as an enlarged conversation, there is no magic number of people that transfer it to “speech land”
   - **Familiarity with the speaker**
     - Finding connecting points with your audience is a good way to remove tension from the experience, most people feel better in a room of their peers
   - **Degree of agreement with the speaker**
     - Tension is increased when the audience is hostile to your position, DON’T PANIC, try and find legitimate common ground, have a conversation
   - **Degree of perceived power over the speaker**
     - Be aware that if you perceive power differences this will impact your tensions, this is normal, remember that the talk is a conversation and you are the expert on the material you are presenting
   - **The audience’s evaluative function**
     - Remember that you receive positive as well as negative from the audience, try to avoid focusing only on negative feedback

2. **The Speaker needs to understand**
   - **The observational ability of the listeners**
     - People do not see your inner turmoil, most listeners observe only your outward positive persona
   - **How to accurately evaluate audience reactions**
     - Often speakers misinterpret audience reactions, do not become overly concerned with a few audience members thus increasing your tension
   - **What the audience desires**
     - Most audiences want you to succeed, they want to relax and enjoy their experience, do not assume that your audience is out to get you