Cascade Outreach Model

Prof. Carolina Odman

Inter-University Institute for Data Intensive Astronomy

University of the Western Cape
Focus of the Cascade Outreach Model

Outreach

- Know your audience
- Avoid jargon
- Appeal to their interests
- Answer difficult questions
- Respect

Content
- Suitability
- Interactivity
- Scientific rigor
- Informative
- Edutainment

Audience

Scientist Communicator
Some challenges doing outreach:

- Credit for doing outreach
- Career advancement opportunities
- Advocacy vs science communication
- Relatability, Role Modelling
- Biographical, Personal
- Exposure, Vulnerability
- Message vs. experience
- Imposter Syndrome
MOTIVATION
A young-people centred approach

In primary school, a high school kid is who a child wants to be like. For a high school learner, someone at university “has made it”. For students, a graduate has achieved something big. For graduate students, researchers or lecturers are an image of success.

CONCEPT

In small career steps, we seek to build relatable role models in large numbers.
Addressing Challenges

- Credit for doing outreach
- The more people are doing it, the more recognised it becomes
  - Career advancement opportunities
- Publicly funded grants and scholarships increasingly ask of benefits to society. Reaching out is one
  - Advocacy vs science communication
  - Relatability, Role Modelling
  - Biographical, Personal
  - Exposure, Vulnerability
- Safety in numbers
- Message vs. experience
  - Not being alone shared experience
- Imposter Syndrome
  - Being looked up to
What’s in it for the scientist communicators?

- Empowering experience: Have someone to look up to and have others look up to one
- Shared outreach experiences
- Communication skills
- Teaching skills
- Speak to their audiences in their own languages
- Helping the formal education system
- Relatability in diversity
- Making the scientific community in South Africa representative of the people.
- Leadership skills.
• Established researchers:
Always take a younger researcher along to events and share the limelight, or pass on the opportunity all together

• Give global exposure:
Pass on media opportunities to young researchers, and take the time into account in terms of expected progress delivery

• High School mentorship:
Many of our young researchers go home and help younger learners with Maths and Science

• Women in science events:
Excellent opportunities for informal mentorship and networking.

• Undergraduate opportunities:
Need an intern? Look among students and create work-study opportunities. This also helps build social capital for 1st generation students
Unless young people see scientists who look like them, talk like them, and come from the same background, they won’t easily see themselves in scientific professions. Unless families see successful scientists, they can’t easily wish for their child to emulate them.

The cascade outreach model presents young people with a diverse and representative pool of successful young scientists that they can relate to through more than only interest in science. Every role model’s personal journey with its successes and challenges is inspiring.

Young scientists gain ownership of their field by being the faces and the voices of that field, and thereby, can exercise agency as to where to take the field, usually turning it into a more inclusive and diverse environment.

Thank you!

Contact: codman@uwc.ac.za