Developing storytelling skills for public and community engagement in Veterinary Medicine

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By the end of this session, we will…

• Evaluate storytelling as a creative practice
• Identify opportunities where this process could be applied in teaching and disciplinary contexts
• Write a (very) short story
Why?
Storytelling as creative practice

Science communication “myths” (Emerson, 2017)
• Science is not creative
• Scientists are not good writers
• Science is boring

“Narratives are easier to process and generate more attention and engagement” and may present science from a more “human [scale] point of view”

Dahlstrom (2014; p.13618)
Benefits and challenges

- Skills
- Time
- Confidence
- Support
- Persuasion
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Enjoyment
- Interest
- Engagement
Four ways of knowing

Heron & Reason (2008)

• Experiential
• Presentational
• Propositional
• Practical
Scientists as writers

Writing pathways
• Routine
• Adaptive
• Transitioning

(from Emerson 2017)
Science stories

• Case reports
• Articles
• Social media
• Talks, seminars and presentations
• Grant applications
• Images, figures and graphs
• Equations

Leonardo da Vinci “View of a Skull II”

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_a_Skull_II.jpg
Veterinary medicine

• Communication skills
• Connection to research “place”
• Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES):
  – My confidence to be innovative or creative has developed during my course
  – My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my course
Veterinary medicine

CAB Abstracts search:
• case studies (“story so far”, “success story”, use of “story of” instead of “case on”)
• stories of professional practice
• history
• a small number of storytelling pieces (<5)
Creating the story

- Writing and reflection
- Time outdoors
- Gathering resources
Writing time!

- Writing and reflection
- Time outdoors
- Gathering resources
Session summary

• Storytelling as a creative practice
• Opportunities where this process could be applied in your teaching and disciplinary context
• Speed story-writing

The story doesn’t end here...!
Further reading


Olson, R. (2015). *Houston, we have a narrative: Why science needs story*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
References


