

Australian Entomological Society

Communicating science to influence human behaviour

Dr Louise Kuchel
School of Biological Sciences
The University of Queensland
l.kuchel@uq.edu.au

Most of us have good intentions
but fail miserably when it comes
to taking action

Question

What is the main purpose of communication?

Almost all communication implicitly aims to influence the behaviour of other people...

...Including any communication about your research

Example

What is a public awareness campaign about the idea that the climate is changing trying to do?

If you were going to link it to direct behaviours what would they be – who do you want to do what?

Then why not communicate explicitly about those things to the appropriate people?

Changing behaviour, and sustaining these changes over time, is a difficult process.

Educating the public and providing information is a start but rarely enough for substantive change.

Branding Biodiversity - recommendations

the formula

 + **A** = **public change**
love *action*

 + **A** = **policy change**
need *action*

i ♥ biodiversity

what to say



less loss

Kill the extinction message. Loss generates apathy, not action.



more love

Celebrate our love of nature. It is the most powerful driver of public behaviour.



target need

Use the Need message wisely. It's often not right for public consumption, but it's the cornerstone of policy and business decisions.



add action

Always partner Love and Need messages with Action. Once your audience is inspired, they will want to know what to do.

i ♥ biodiversity

Communication strategies

Content or tools?

Focus on content 1st

What is your research about?

Write 1 or 2 sentences

Who will be interested in your research and why?

Discuss with the person next to you and write a list.

Include academic and applied people and reasons.

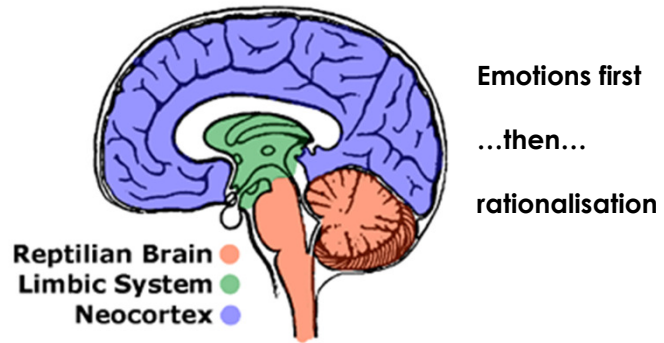
Draw the following...

Communication is a 2 way process

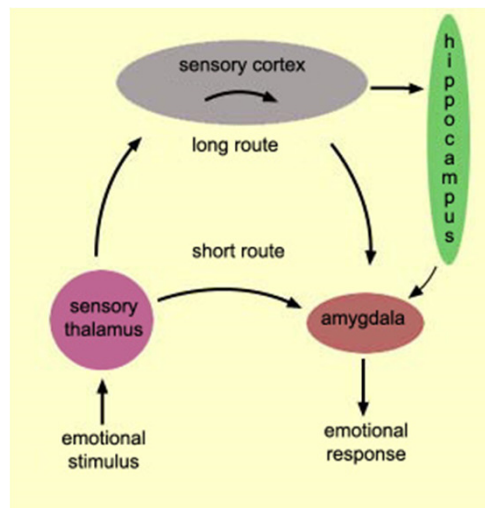


Decisions – how are they made

The Evolution-Designed Brain



neocortex



People tend to prefer one route over another

System 1 types — like to make decisions based on our gut feelings.

System 2 types — prefer to carefully think things through.

Situational factors can nudge people towards System 1 or System 2 thinking.

Decisions – how are they made



My Communication Builder

Concrete, specific goals

Many behaviour change interventions fail because they attempt to:

- change the wrong behaviours, or
- change too many behaviours at once.

Behaviour	Impact	Probability of Adoption	Current Penetration	Selection Decision
1	Low	Low	Moderate	No
2	High	High	High	No
3	High	High	Low	Yes

McKenzie-Mohr (2011)
Hine et al (2015)

It's your turn to take action...

1. Write a sentence or two for a discussion in a scientific paper about what action other researchers can take with your findings (= your significance). Make it explicit.
2. Write a note about what you plan to do to follow up on this workshop by end of December and by end of March.
3. Email these to l.kuchel@uq.edu.au
I'll re-send to you so you can see how you are progressing.

Useful references

- Futerra Sustainability Communications (2010) Branding Biodiversity
[www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/Branding Biodiversity.pdf](http://www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/Branding_Biodiversity.pdf)
- Hine et al (2015) Behaviourally Effective Communications for Invasive Animals Management: A Practical Guide.
<http://www.invasiveanimals.com>
- PNAS series on the science of science communication, 2013