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# Keynote Lecture

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## KL2

### Communicating your research to different audiences

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We are often familiar with the mechanics and style of delivering our research findings to our peers, through our publications, at conferences and other meetings. Where appropriate, we use our research to inform our teaching. Higher level, specialised courses and modules enable us to focus on our particular interests and expertise. We also seek to inspire students at earlier stages in their careers by explaining how research has informed knowledge. Perhaps when teaching students in other disciplines, we also consider what understanding they are bringing to the classroom, so that we can engage with them at an appropriate level.

Beyond the academic environment, there are many different audiences. Social media, magazines and the press provide routes for written communications about our research or our knowledge to the wider world – sometimes we are asked to comment because of our relevant expertise; at other times we might wish to disseminate our findings; we may also be involved in media outputs without any active involvement on our part. Podcasts and video provide additional visual and aural routes for communicating research to large audiences. The internet provides a permanent record of outputs. Teaching packages and outreach activities provide opportunities for work with younger adults and schoolchildren. Personal appearances, through presentations or other activities enable direct engagement with an audience, and encourage us to think more creatively about how we might have an impact on their perceptions, knowledge, attitudes or behaviour.

This presentation will be a personal account of experiences in science communication and public engagement. My research focuses on the interactions occurring between microorganisms and inert surfaces, relating to cross-contamination, infection control, and hand hygiene. This work demands significant cross-disciplinary collaborations with surface engineers, polymer technologists, chemists and so on, and we recognise that our different technical languages and prior knowledge may affect our understanding of one another's work. These differences in language extend across all disciplines, and it is important that we – and our students – do our best to ensure that our messages to external audiences are clear, thought-provoking and delivered in an engaging manner. The use of art, literature, history or other subject may facilitate this engagement.

It is important that any event focusing on science communication is carefully planned, with aims clearly defined and outcomes evaluated. In short, science communication and public engagement themselves become academic disciplines, with rigour applied to the design, delivery and evaluation of events, and dissemination of practice and findings through publication becoming increasingly valuable. It sounds just like research!