Even excellent science only has an impact when it is effectively communicated. Scientific papers in refereed journals are the currency of documenting the scientific process, however posters, PowerPoint presentations and the web are also essential for communicating new insights and current research to fellow scientists. These skills are readily applied to communicating at various levels – not only fellow scientists, but also resource managers and the broader community. These two or five day courses provide participants with a science communication toolbox for effectively communicating their own data. At the end of the course, participants will have been introduced to the principles of effective science communication, used hands-on sessions to create their own science communication products, and been introduced to some of the software used in science communication.

Elements of science communication

Appropriate images and graphics are the basis of effective science communication, as they can support the spoken word or written text, justifying and reinforcing key messages. The first task in effective science communication is to collect resources including maps, satellite and local photographs, video footage, tables and figures.

Applied principles of layout design

For posters and science newsletters, excessive text tends to turn the reader away, stopping an opportunity for effective communication. The principle of layout design is to focus on conceptual diagrams and other visual elements supported by extended explanatory legends to capture key messages. Participants will learn the skills to design their own science newsletters and posters.

Use and production of conceptual diagrams

The ability to capture main messages and concepts is the basis of effective communication. One tool that aids this process by clarifying thinking, is the production of conceptual diagrams. Conceptual diagrams can be used from ecosystem-scale processes down to detailed processes of nutrient dynamics. Participants will learn how to design and produce a conceptual diagram.

Designing and producing a website

An increasingly important form of communication is through the web. However, if websites are convoluted without clear maps, logical links and clearly presented information, they are frustrating and will not be revisited. Participants will learn effective use of graphical elements and key concepts to enable them to design and produce a website based upon their own research.

Oral Presentations

Scientific conferences and other meetings are the forum for discussing the newest ideas and concepts. Therefore being able to communicate orally is essential, and effectively using PowerPoint can assist greatly in ensuring that an audience understands and retains key messages.

Further Information

For further information on the Integration and Application Network Science Communication Courses, including details and registration for upcoming courses, please visit the course website at www.ian.umces.edu/sccourse