

Lessons Learned from Teaching about Risk Communication

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Over the past couple of years, we have developed innovative curricula to teach risk and crisis communication to upper year geoscience, emergency management and engineering students at the University of Canterbury and affiliated institutions in New Zealand. Our research specialises in using role-play (e.g., *Communicate the Quake*; Dohaney et al. 2016) to teach upper year geoscience students science and risk communication best practice. In this poster, we will share the 'lessons learned' from our communication training experiences. We are now implementing a knowledge transfer initiative (funded by EQC and QuakeCoRE) which brings the lessons from this ongoing research to practitioners.

Lesson 1. A holistic and interdisciplinary approach

Understanding and teaching communication requires a holistic approach which incorporates advice from the scholarly literature from many disciplines.

Lesson 2. Communication is cultured and contextualised

Communication is cultured and highly contextualised. Learning about communication should incorporate social, political, economic and cultural elements.

Lesson 3. Communication is multi-faceted

Communication is multi-faceted (i.e., occurs in multiple formats and styles) and should be carefully considered to match the appropriate situation and information needs of the audiences.



Training (like role-play) requires participants to work together (shown above) to decide on which communication strategy should be used, under specific contexts. Students consider the best course of action after an earthquake has occurred in the Communicate the Quake role-play.

Lesson 4. Role-play can be used to improve communication perceptions and confidence

Our research has shown that role-play (i.e., analogous to professional training exercises) is effective at improving learner's confidence and perceptions of communication in complex scenarios and to different stakeholders.

Lesson 5. Feedback is key

Meaningful feedback is key to improving communication. It allows learners to try out new strategies and receive specific feedback in a safe learning environment.

Lesson 6. The value of evaluation and education research

Education research is vital for teaching communication effectively. Effective practice uses sound pedagogy to build and evaluate communication curricula.