

CAPOD Funding Report

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Event /Course Title	American Anthropological Association Workshop: Communicate with Confidence: How to Cultivate Your Public Voice
Date of event	15/11/16

1. Brief description of Event (50-100 words): event consisted of 50 people and 4 presenters all from different public engagement backgrounds and magazines. We were introduced to ideas of unique selling points and personal marketing to create an engaging and active public persona, then we were taught how to cultivate a public voice which fits these criteria (simplicity of writing, no jargon, story telling techniques to keep readers hooked etc.) and finally key networking points and ways of approaching members of magazines and other public spheres in a way that is clear, concise, to the point and engaging, showing how much they can benefit from our research and critically, why our research is important to the public. Some informal networking after the event.

2. What were the benefits of attending and what did you gain from the experience in terms of transferable skills and knowledge.

I learned the key differences between writing for academia and writing for the general public (such as no use of jargon, shaping your point and research around an engaging story line, using relatable, topical or contemporary examples, how to inject non-cringeworthy humour etc. Speakers from all platforms represented (public speaking, magazine, news and community engagement) all put forward these key ideas described above and went on to add specific points to their own industries, such as personability for news and story-telling for magazine. Further, I learned how these skills can help me not only in all public aspects of my academic career but also in networking. How this public persona we cultivate should grow and network through social media as well as events, and how to approach and discuss academic research with professionals outside of the academy. For the first time I feel confident in my ability to engage with professionals outside of the academy and the wider public about my research.

3. What actions will you be taking as a result of attending or by making new networking contacts. I will begin building my public persona following the points discussed above, starting with an engaged online presence and create my own website in which I will write informal pieces regularly. I have also contacted my local newspaper and offered to write a short piece or carry out a short interview about my research. At the post-event networking I was invited to write a piece for an Australian magazine on my research topic. I hope all this creates the first steps to get the ball rolling with my public engagement. I hope to create a community engagement in my final year of my PhD, now that I have a basic framework.

4. Can you share any additional resources produced in connection with the event (e.g. feedback from participants, training resources, website links, and additional materials.

We did not receive any of this sort of material, as talks were not backed up by powerpoint, and we were encouraged to get in touch directly with editors etc if we had any further or specific questions.

5. Tips/experience learned from the event

Networking isn't as scary as it looks. Once you know how to break the ice it becomes easier and easier.

Always say yes to public engagements unless you have a very good reason not to. It only takes one event to take off for your public persona to become recognised and important. You never know which event that will be so you must always try and engage.

Reach out for people, don't wait for them to come to you. Reporters etc. only hear of the big things happening independently once you are in the public sphere, so for the first few years you will have to make the effort to let them know what is going on with your research.

Online presence is critical. Most public connections, offers, reaching outs and engagement for academics happen through twitter etc. So you must make sure yours is active and good. Pin your most popular tweets at the top of your timeline so it's the first thing everyone sees. Always be cautious with the opinions you share on social media, unless they don't form part of the public persona you are creating you are best to keeping them to yourself.

6. Any additional comments or information regarding the event

It was a very refreshing experience and a space where we could ask all the questions about public engagement we can't ask anywhere else -or might be shy to. Good to see all other anthropologists are as technologically illiterate as myself, and being taught the basics of it.