

Sharing Expertise: Public Scholarship for Academics

Welcome faculty. We know things are busy. So, let's get right into something that could uh really give your work a boost. We're drawing from your colleagues own experiences today.

Yeah. Specifically, we're diving into the benefits of sharing what you know your academic expertise with the well the broader public.

And our guide for this is an article called sharing expertise with the public.

That's right. It's from Level Up, a mid-career guide for faculty. And the interesting thing is this is a publication put together by faculty for faculty.

So peer-to-peer advice.

Exactly. You can find the whole thing on the Center for Faculty Excellence website. But our mission today really is just to unpack the practical upsides for you when you do this kind of public scholarship.

Okay. So this level up article, it starts with something maybe a bit unexpected. Improved communication skills.

Yeah, it sounds simple, but think about it. When you have to explain complex stuff to people outside your field, you're forced to be clear, concise.

Lose the jargon. Totally. You have to find different words. The article puts it nicely. The order of the day in engaging with the public is be brief and to the point. Technical details are not necessary, but clarity is.

Brief and clear.

And doing that, it actually sharpens how you communicate back in the academic world too. Your lectures, your writing. Yeah.

It all benefits,

right? Like you're stress testing your own ideas by explaining them simply.

Precisely. And that clarity, well, it helps get your ideas out there more broadly.

Okay. So, that leads to the next point. increased reach and visibility.

Yeah, exactly. The article really highlights this. Writing or speaking for a general audience can mean your work gets picked up by, you know, news outlets, local news or bigger.

Could be local, national, even international. Sometimes the piece mentions University of Nebraska Omaha authors getting like tens of thousands of reads on non-technical articles.

Wow. Tens of thousands. That's huge visibility.

It really is. And that helps you obviously, but it also boosts the university's profile. file. It's community engagement, all that stuff.

And visibility connects to credibility, right? The public generally trusts professors.

They do. Uh studies like the Ipsos veracity index, Gallup polls on ethics, they consistently show academics rank pretty high in public trust.

So engaging publicly lets you sort of tap into that existing trust.

Yeah, you're building on a solid foundation. And level up makes another good point here. Once you share your expertise, say with a media outlet, they might come back

often. Yeah, they see you as a reliable source. So you might get repeat requests for commentary, print, uh online, maybe even TV. It snowballs.

Okay, so better communication, wider reach, more credibility, new opportunities. What about the core research itself? Does public engagement affect that?

That's actually one of the most fascinating points in the article. Interacting with non-speists, people asking different kinds of questions.

That can spark new ideas.

Exactly. It can genuinely lead to new research questions or projects you might ever thought of just talking to colleagues in your specific niche?

Getting outside the echo chamber a bit,

right? It can bring a fresh perspective, maybe reveal blind spots and enrich your academic work in uh sometimes really unexpected ways.

That's a compelling benefit.

And there's one more thing, kind of a personal reward. The article links it to teaching.

How so?

Well, you know that satisfaction you get from sharing knowledge with students who are really engaged.

Sure.

Engaging with the public can feel similar. Sometimes the article suggests the public audience audience can be incredibly attentive, really eager to learn. It's rewarding in that same way.

Interesting. So, let's recap quickly. This advice from fellow faculty in Level Up suggests that sharing your expertise publicly can well sharpen your communication,

massively expand your reach and visibility,

bolster your credibility,

open doors to new opportunities,

and even feed back into and inspire your academic research.

It's quite a list of potential benefits.

It really is. So, maybe the Final thought for everyone listening is this. Considering all these advantages laid out by your peers,

how might proactively seeking ways to share your expertise outside the usual academic channels, how might that shape your current work or maybe open up unexpected paths for the future?

Something to think about, what impact could extending your expertise beyond campus have?