**Elevator Pitch: An Activity to Help Students Communicate Their Research**

**Description:**   
Is it not trivial for many scientists, especially beginning researchers (e.g. undergraduate students), to concisely articulate the scope, value, and impact of their research and research contributions. Being able to do so can be empowering and can foster the development of a science identity. An elevator pitch is a short oral summary, generally less than 1 minute or the time you would ride in an elevator. An elevator pitch can prove useful in many contexts - job-seekers will develop an elevator pitch to describe themselves to a potential employer, product developers will develop an elevator pitch to promote a new item, and scientists use elevator pitches to describe their work to colleagues.

In this activity, students and the research mentor co-develop an elevator pitch that students can use to communicate their research. By providing students with the language and confidence to concisely articulate their research and research contributions, this activity touches on the following components of the SEA-PHAGES instructional model for developing student Project Ownership Content and Emotion, and Networking, which include 1) peer collaborations, 2) presentation, and 3) encouraging engagement and enthusiasm.

After completing this module, students should be able to clearly articulate to scientists and non-scientists the scope, value, and impact of their research and research contributions in a short, 1-2 minute elevator pitch

**Intended Teaching Setting**

**Course level:** for all students, particularly for those with little or no prior research experience  
**Instructional Setting:** in-person classroom  
**Implementation Time Frame:** ~ 20 minutes

**Project Documents**

**Facilitator document:** this document; instructions on subsequent pages.**Learning activity document(s):** none, activity provided on subsequent pages.**Assessment document(s):** none, recommendations provided on subsequent pages.

**Elevator Pitch**

To implement this activity:

1. Pick a date mid-way through the semester for this in-class group activity.
2. Conduct a brainstorming activity and ask students for their suggestions/answers for the following 4 questions:
   1. What are we doing this semester?
   2. Why are we doing this?
   3. What are some potential benefits of our research?
   4. How can we relate some of these benefits to people’s everyday life?
3. Select a few answers from each question to assemble an elevator pitch (See example below).
4. This activity can be done more than once in the same term and can be made into a regular activity if it is enjoyed. For each iteration, you can change the target audience for which the elevator pitch is being developed. For example, develop an elevator pitch for a pharmaceutical company, or your non-scientist friends, or grandparents, or for kids. Parents and peers are great target audiences for an elevator pitch developed in the first few weeks of the term because students are usually eager to talk about their new research class with these groups.
5. Critical in this activity is for students to feel heard and own the narrative. It is less about getting it exactly right the first time and more about helping students find their voice as scientists.

**Example**

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| What are we doing this semester?  *Example of answers:*   * ***Finding phage*** * *Purifying phage* * *Extracting DNA* * *Plaque assays* * *Imaging phage* | Why are we doing this?  *Example of answers:*   * *To discover new viruses* * *To cure tuberculosis* * ***To learn more about phages*** |
| What are some benefits of what we may uncover?  *Example of answers:*   * *Understand phage biology* * ***Kill bacteria or treat infections*** * *Phage therapy* * *Know how abundant phages are* | How can we relate some of these benefits to people’s everyday life?  *Example of answers:*   * *Treat multi-drug resistant infections* * ***Save lives*** |
| Sample Elevator Pitch from answers above:  *My research is on* ***finding new viruses that infect bacteria****, and studying them. The more we learn about how these viruses interact with and kill bacteria, the* ***more strategies we will have to kill bacteria*** *too. In fact, some of these viruses have already been used to* ***treat people dying of bacterial infections and saved their lives.*** | |