

## January 27, 2022: Giving Science Its Rap

Maynard Okereke opened by describing the basics of scicomm (science communication) which was a new concept for me and my students. He then related scicomm to the work of Bill Nye and other famous scientists that have played a large part in elevating the field of science. Maynard describes the main goals of a science communicator to be drawing excitement, sparking curiosity, and informing the public about what is going on. Our world gets smaller and smaller each day with the advancements in technology and social media specifically. Science communicators help bridge the gap between the research and the general public. Over the past two years specifically, science communicators have informed the public about the development of the pandemic. Social media has truly allowed for messages to be spread quickly. After the webinar that is one thing a specific student brought attention to. The student spoke about how their parents often talked about the negativity of social media but it can be used for good. They were excited to share that message.

That also illustrates a point Maynard was seeking to make, science communicators are allowing for more people to be connected to science. Specifically minorities and youth. It is vital for underserved communities and populations to be informed of opportunities in the STEM world.

Maynard also gave some encouragement to students on seeking a successful future. He shared to do what you love (students latched on to his reference of making money), stay curious (age does not matter), and to not be afraid to shine. I resonated with that point most. He spoke about how as we come into our careers, imposter syndrome is bound to happen but we must express to people what we are passionate about and continue to do what we love.

Maynard spent the last portion of his talk speaking about his time on the E/V Nautilus conducting ocean exploration research. My students were blown away when he shared that approximately 80% of the ocean floor is unmapped. It is particularly hard to wrap your head around how the ocean can take up so much area on our planet yet be so undiscovered. Maynard spent 30 days at sea communicating science, conducting seismic studies, collecting data and mapping the ocean floor.

It was very interesting to see the “Walle” like machines the E/V Nautilus used to work on seafloor mapping. He also shared that as the boat navigates across the sea, data is collected to inform them of the seafloor dynamics. My students and myself agreed the boat sounds truly incredible.

Maynard was a very energetic man with a passion for science; it's no surprise that he has made a successful career as a science communicator. It was great for my minority students to see someone successful in STEM that looks like them. I look forward to seeing more of his work.