

Turning safety observations into messages

Risk assessments within an academic context

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The challenges and (our ACS-funded) solution

- Addressing a perception that laboratory risk assessments are “just a hoop I have to jump through”
- Embedding a safety culture in a university setting that recognises risk assessments are about intellectual engagement
- That it’s paramount to address professional and personal responsibilities; legal compliance can then follow
- How to tackle this?
- A short, compelling video.....

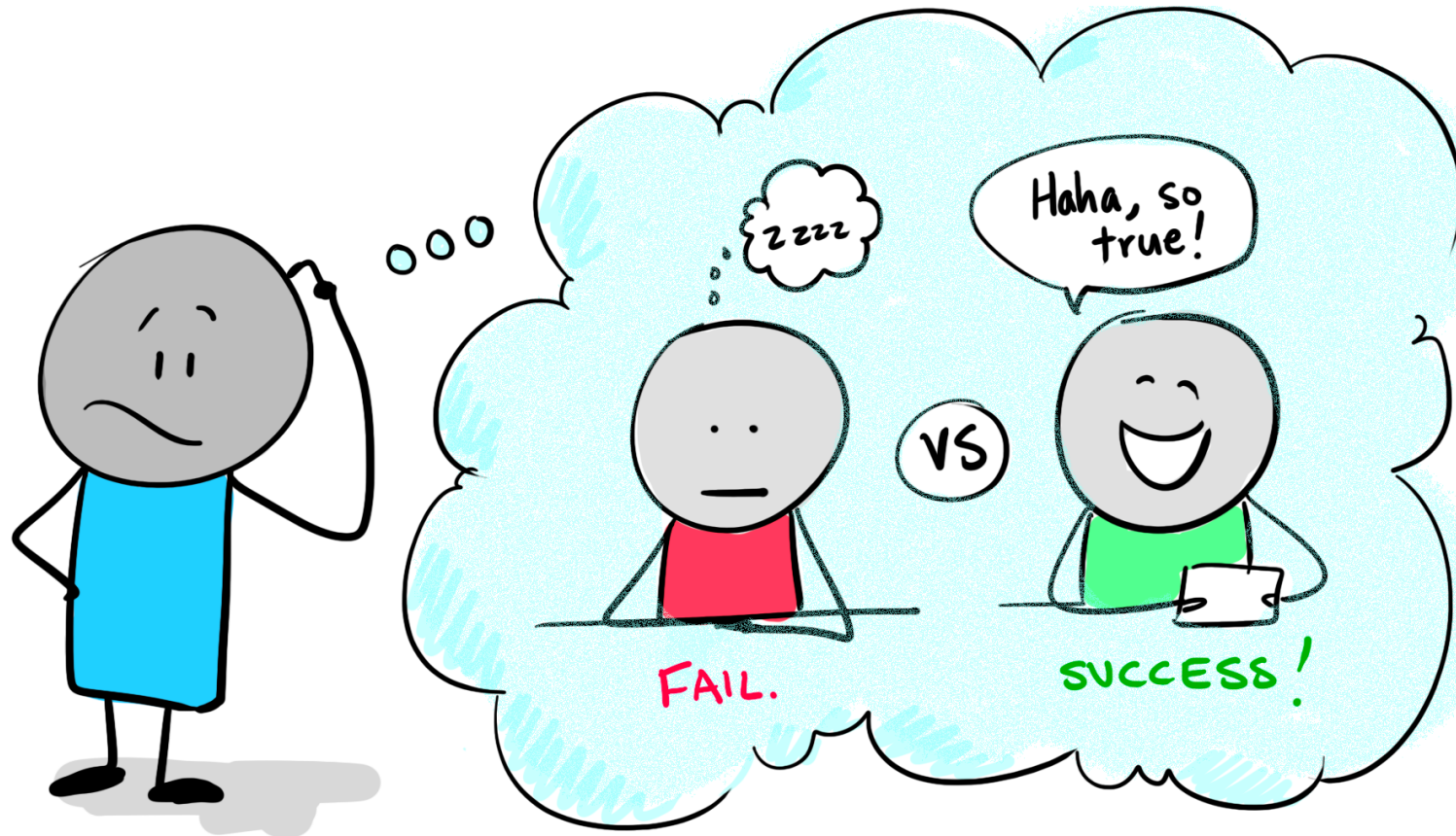
Background

- As departmental chair, School of Chemistry, University of Bristol
- **THREE basic, simple rules:**
 1. Everyone is always appropriately protected - safety glasses/ lab coats + whatever else is necessary
 2. A risk assessment is done for every procedure, every time you do that procedure
 3. No lone working - ever
- Risk assessments were the hardest to crack yet underpin 1 and 3
- Why? The “paper trail conjecture”

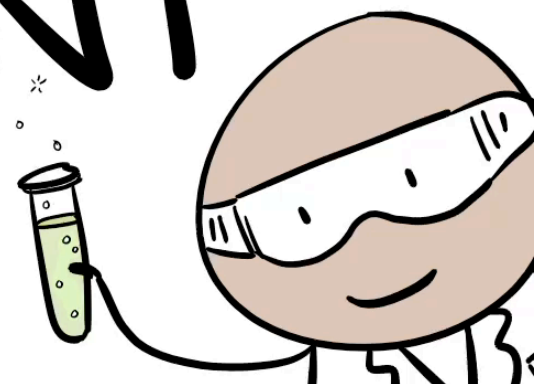
What's so hard about why do a risk assessment?

- “I have to rewrite it each time? Really? Why can't I just copy it?”
- Form not function was the focus
- Confusion around legal compliance vs. an individual's personal and professional responsibilities to themselves and others
- There were then lengthy explanations about what was needed, how it was about “thinking” (not mindless *cut and paste*) and how a risk assessment could inform you in so many ways
- There had to be a better way to put “thinking” (intellectual engagement) at the heart of a “why do a risk assessment?”

How can we make safety content engaging?



LABORATORY RISK ASSESSMENT



Acknowledgments

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Where to next?

- Aiming to produce a series of safety videos based on use of simple metaphors (where appropriate) and clear messaging
- Covering other topics:
 - Systems connections between green chemistry and lab safety
 - Interpreting GHS label for risk assessment purposes
 - Laboratory ventilation awareness
 - Lone working