



END NOTES/RESEARCH FROM *WRITING TO BE UNDERSTOOD*

Chapter One: Who Are Your Readers?

In the Prologue of her memoir, Hope Jahren forges a connection with readers: Hope Jahren: *Lab Girl* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016).

The research about students and teachers' similarities can be found here: Hunter Gelbach et al, "Creating birds of similar feathers: Leveraging similarity to improve teacher-student relationships and academic achievement," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 108, 342–352.

Chapter Two: The Absent Reader

For more information on the connections between emotion, learning, and memory, see the following: Chai M. Tyng, Hafeez U. Amin, Mohamad N. M. Saad, and Aamir S. Malik, "The Influences of Emotion on Learning and Memory," *Frontiers in Psychology* v. 8, August 2017 (Published online August 24, 2017).

The quote from Sherry Turkle comes from an interview she did with *MIT News* published November 17, 2015, titled "3 Questions: Sherry Turkle on 'Reclaiming Conversation.'" It is the subject of her book *Reclaiming Conversation* (New York: Penguin, 2015).

Chapter Three: How Much Do They Need to Know?

The description of the music-tapping experiment was described in this article by Chip Heath and Dan Heath: "The Curse of Knowledge," *Harvard Business Review*, December 2006.

Sabine Hossenfelder's quote about oversimplification of scientific information comes from an article Hossenfelder published in the online publication Aeon.co, titled "What I learned as a

hired consultant to autodidact physicists.” I checked with Hossenfelder, and she stands by her words.

Chapter Four: What Do They Already Know?

Here’s the research about the illusion of explanatory depth: Leonid Rozenblit and Frank Keil, “The Misunderstood Limits of Folk Science: An Illusion of Explanatory Depth,” *Cognitive Science* 26.5 (2002): 521–562.

Find Daniel Levitin’s comments about complex events in his excellent book *A Field Guide to Lies* (New York: Dutton, 2016).

For the definite, academic explanation of the topic of bullshit, check out this book: Harry G. Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Chapter Five: The Tough Audience

Assess your own “need for closure” at this site:

http://Terpconnect.umd.edu/~hannahk/NFC_Scale.html

I first encountered Else Frenkel-Brunswick’s fascinating dog/cat research in Jamie Holmes’s book *Nonsense*. (See the bibliography.) The original article by Frenkel-Brunswick, which is hard to dig up, was published in 1948 in the *Journal of Personality* (volume 18), with the title “Intolerance of Ambiguity as an Emotional and Perceptual Personality Variable.”

Read more about the risks we don’t want to face in Michele Wucker’s book *The Gray Rhino* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016).

For more on moral taste buds see Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon, 2012).

Chapter Six: Curiosity Is Your Accomplice

The “Higgs boson as Laurence of Arabia” metaphor comes from this article: Dennis Overbye, “Physicists Find Elusive Particle Seen as Key to Universe,” *New York Times*, July 4, 2012.

Read about George Loewenstein’s information gap theory of curiosity in Loewenstein’s article, “The psychology of curiosity: a review and reinterpretation,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 116(1), 75–98.

For more on episemic curiosity, see Jordan Litman, “Curiosity and the pleasures of learning,” *Cognition and Emotion*, 19 (2005), 793–814.

The quote about the curiosity sweet spot comes from Mario Livio, *Why: What Makes Us Curious* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017).

For more insight on headlines from BuzzFeed itself, check out the article “18 Clever Tips for Writing Headlines That’ll Make People Feel Things,” by Carolyn Kylstra, January 22, 2016.

Chapter Seven: Abstractions and Detail

For more on detail and learning, read John Medina’s book *Brain Rules* (Seattle: Pear Press, 2014).

Chapter Eight: Explanatory Analogies

My cursory research (Wikipedia) into black swans indicates that the Dutch captain Willem de Vlamingh encountered black swans on the Swan River (which he named) in January 1697. Of course, black swans would have been no surprise to the natives of Australia at that time. Metaphors clearly rely on cultural context.

To see the elephant/rider metaphor in its full context, read Jonathan Haidt's book *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

Check out the Metamia database at metaphorlab.org/metamia-a-free-database-of-analogy-and-metaphor/. The organization also hosts an annual conference, the Metaphor Festival, dedicated to the use of figurative language. If you're in Amsterdam, check it out and let me know what it's like.

Chapter Nine: Stories

For a fascinating look at split brain research, see: Michael Gazziniga, *Who's in Charge: Free Will and the Science of the Brain* (New York: Ecco, 2011).

Listen to Uri Hasson describing his own research on his TED talk: www.ted.com/speakers/uri_hasson.

Find the brief story of the student whistling Vivaldi in this book: Robert Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at our Best and Worst* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017).

The quote about our brains lighting up like Las Vegas when they hear stories from from Daniel Coyle's *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups* (New York: Bantam Books, 2018).

The advice about avoiding the "sinking ship of stories" appears in this wonderful book: Poornima Vijayashanker and Karen Catlin, *Present! A Techie's Guide to Public Speaking* (CreateSpace, 2015).

Chapter Eleven: Tone and Style

Find the marvelous quote about academic writing here: Hope Jahren, *Lab Girl* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016).

For more on human conversation, see N.J. Enfield, *How We Talk: The Inner Workings of Conversation* (New York: Basic books, 2017).

You can try SCIGen on the lab's website: <https://pdos.csail.mit.edu/archive/scigen/>.

For more on the SCIGen scandal, read Richard Van Noorden, "Publishers withdraw more than 120 gibberish papers" *Nature News*, February 24, 2014.

Chapter Twelve: Images and Imagery

In reporting on the study about people reading Jane Austen in an MRI machine: I realize that fMRI data and interpretation may be flawed. We cannot necessarily be certain that brain activity seen on these scans isn't spurious. But this is a book about writing, not brain surgery, so I hope you'll take the addition of research as it was intended—to reinforce good writing habits.

Read more about that research here: Corrie Goldman, "This Is Your Brain on Austen," *Stanford Report*, September 7, 2012.

For a description of the study referring to crime as a virus or a beast of prey, refer to the Stanford News article by Adam Gorlick, “Is crime a virus or a beast? When describing crime, Stanford study shows the word you pick can frame the debate on how to fight it,” *Stanford Report*, February 23, 2011.

Find this and other intentionally egregious misuses of analogy on the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest website: www.bulwer-lytton.com.

Chapter Thirteen: Credibility, Humanity, and Humility

My favorite research study of all time may be this one: Daniel Oppenheimer, “Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: Problems with Using Long Words Needlessly,” *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 20: 139–156 (2006).

Jonathan Haidt’s wonderful quote about friends changing our minds comes from his book, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon, 2012)

The description of powerless communication comes from Adam Grant’s *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success* (New York: Viking, 2013)

For the pratfall effect research, see Aronson, Willerman, and Floyd, “The effect of a pratfall on increasing interpersonal attractiveness,” *Psychonomic Science*, 4(6), 227–228.

Chapter Fourteen: Humor

Thomas Veatch, “A Theory of Humor,” *International Journal of Humor Research*, 11/2, 161–216.

The benign violation theory of humor is described in this book: Peter McGraw and Joel Warner, *The Humor Code: A Global Search for What Makes Things Funny* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014).

The quote about laughter and sense making can be found in Jamie Holmes, *Nonsense: The Power of Not Knowing*, (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2014).

Neil deGrasse Tyson brings the shotgun wedding and other humorous observations to his work in *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2017).

Read the research on humor in healthcare in Wiley-Blackwell, “Humor Plays an Important Role in Healthcare Even When Patients Are Terminally Ill,” *Science Daily*, April 9, 2008.

For a masterful display of humor in nonfiction, read Dan Ariely and Jeff Kreisler, *Dollars and Sense: How We Misthink Money and How to Spend Smarter*, (New York: Harper, 2017).

Chapter 15: Finding Your Personal Style

Find the quote about personal style in this book: Francis-Noël Thomas and Mark Turner, *Clear and Simple as the Truth: Writing Classic Prose* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).