Robert Siegler: The Role Model For Clarity

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Thank You All For Coming!
Thank You,


You All Have Talked About Kids’ Math Learning...
Images Come To My Mind When I Think About Writing

My Talk Today:

• Why is writing so hard?

• What are the key characteristics of Bob’s writing?

• What is the ONE wisdom you learned from Bob?

• How does Bob mentor your writing?

• What is the take home message?
Why Is Academic Writing So Hard?

“I know all those words, but that sentence makes no sense to me.”

“I am so clever sometimes that I don’t understand a single word of what I am saying.”

Even Punctuation Matters!

An English professor wrote the words:

"A woman without her man is nothing"

on the chalkboard and asked his students to punctuate it correctly.

All of the males in the class wrote:

"A woman, without her man, is nothing."

All the females in the class wrote:

"A woman: without her, man is nothing."

Punctuation is powerful.
Why Is Academic Writing So Hard?

Writing is thinking. To write well is to think clearly. That's why it's so hard.

Which One Is Bob’s Writing?

- precise, but not accurate
- accurate, but not precise
- precise and accurate
What Did You All Say About Bob’s Writing?

Coding Your Responses Is the Easiest Coding Ever!

One Wisdom You Learned From Bob

| Think About Why You Write This Paper and To Whom Are You Writing It For | "Impressing others isn’t the goal of writing. The goal is to make it easier for the readers to learn about your thoughts! You do so by shaping their expectations about what’s important to pay attention to."
| "Think about larger audience, not just yourself!"
| Say What You Mean, and Mean What Say | “Bob is excellent at noticing sloppy writing and making sure that your writing is an accurate reflection of your thoughts.”
| “Never use 37 words for what can be said in 3.” I learned that you should never use extra words to make a point. You should be clear and direct, and always remove the filler. I learned how to “Sieglerize” my papers—A word created by John Opfer. |
One Wisdom You Learned From Bob

| Make Explicit The Theoretical Relevance of Your Study and Connect Methods/Findings With The Theoretical Relevance | “Explain explicitly and point by point why your study is important and to what it is important”
|                                                                                                                     | “Start each paragraph with a sentence that summarizes the main point of the paragraph. Use the rest of the paragraph to explain this point.” |
| Being Truthful / No Bragging                                                                                       | “Make the case for your study, but do not over-claim your findings.” |
|                                                                                                                     | “Being truthful” |
|                                                                                                                     | “Draw Examples From Everyday Examples and Concrete Information” |

What Did Bob Say?

Of Course I’m Right!
I’m Bob.
How Does Bob Mentor Your Writing?

| Spends Lots of Time / Quick Turn Around | “He spends a lot of time mentoring my writing by revising my paper, from the whole structure to word choice. 

“He really check everything of a paper. For the first few drafts of each of my papers, he wrote so many comments and revising suggestions that word cannot fit them into each page. I have to click on each comment box to read them. The final versions are so different from my first drafts that I cannot believe how a paper can improve that much.”

“One of the things I’m most proud of is when I sent him a new paragraph I had written and he only changed 85% of it.” |

How Does Bob Mentor Your Writing?

| Leading By Example | “He is so intense when he writes, which makes you intense.”

“He teaches us how to write by modeling and showing us the process of writing, rather than the product.”

“Teaching by doing and by modeling ...Every time when he worked on my drafts, he basically rewrote the draft. So, I learned by comparing his writing with mine, and by analyzing his writing.” |
| Extremely Detailed Feedback | “Bob focuses on all levels from the macroscopic “main message” to the mid-level organization to the microscopic details of each sentence and paragraph.”

“He suggested me to write a detailed outline before starting to write the manuscript, which was a very good idea. “

“He had me look closely at the (many) edits he had made on my drafts and try to explain to myself why I thought each change was made. “ |

What Did Bethany Say?
Mentoring Continued…

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<th>Gives Honest Feedback &amp; Concrete Complain</th>
<th>“I vividly recall our meeting in 2001 about an advanced draft of Oper &amp; Siegel (2004). The meeting started with him saying, “You really weren’t trained to write a scientific paper, were you?” Bob then proceeded to identify the sequence of topics in a typical scientific paper, which was not at all what I had produced.” “When he gave me feedback on my first version of our paper, I had very contradictory feelings. First, I was hurt, because I knew from his feedbacks that my version was &quot;just shit&quot; (even though he never said so, as delicate he can be to not hurt people, to always stay professional, and to keep being good in his role of mentor), while I had made my very best to give him what I thought was a great paper.” “Why do you write like this?” Frankly, it was painful to learn how to write well as a graduate student of Bob’s – I remember a fair amount of crying and frustration after receiving his feedback- but it really paid off. Thank you, Bob.”</th>
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Pain Level When Writing With Bob…
It Goes Down As You Write More With Bob…

![Graph showing pain levels for different numbers of papers written with Bob]
All of You Are Lucky!

Here Is XD Story…

![XD Image]

After I have edited 64 times..

Even Einstein Struggled:

Abstract

[A common finding across the motivation research literature is that students’ belief that success in science depends on exceptional talent has profound in that subject negatively impacts on their motivation to learn. For example, such beliefs succeed in school, particularly in science and math. Belief in exceptional scientific talent have been shown to be a major factor steering students away from taking science and math courses in high school and college. In the present study reported here, we tested a novel classroom-based intervention, designed to challenge this belief and thereby improve science learning or front the belief in exceptional scientific talent and model the effort required to succeed in science. A demographically diverse group of 402 9th and 10th grade students read one of three types of stories about eminent how successful scientists have lived, worked, and achieved in their lives. One type of story was about the scientists. Stories across the three conditions described highlighted how the...
We recently asked a set of Many students believe that some people are born with exceptional abilities and talents that allow them to succeed in science-related subjects. Interviews were conducted in schools that are currently implementing special programs to teach students about the value of effort and persistence. Interestingly, our interviews with 9th and 10th graders revealed discrepancies between students' responses about what it takes to succeed in science. When asked to describe what kind of people can be scientists, The interviews, Many students believe that some people are born with exceptional abilities and talents that allow them to succeed in science-related subjects. Interviews were conducted in schools that are currently implementing a special program designed to teach students about the value of effort and persistence for learning science. Interestingly, our interviews with 9th and 10th grade students revealed many students responded in ways that would garner approval from teachers and researchers: “A scientist can be any person who has a spark of curiosity in themselves,” “Anyone who seems interested in the field of science,” and “People who have a passion for science.” These egalitarian responses, however, did not seem to translate into students' views of themselves. When asked whether they could become scientists, many students
After 2 page of editing… I hear

Seriously, dude...

is there a name for what’s wrong with you?

After 4 pages of editing… I hear

WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?
After 5 pages of editing… I hear

When It is All Done…Page 7.. I hear

What's Wrong with You?
My Response

When people ask "What's wrong with you?" I usually reply "How about I tell you what's right with me? It's a shorter list."

Even Einstein Struggled: Effects of Learning About Great Scientists’ Struggles on High School Students’ Motivation to Learn Science

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Students’ beliefs that success in science depends on exceptional talent negatively impact their motivation to learn. For example, such beliefs have been shown to be a major factor steering students away from taking science and math courses in high school and college. In the present study, we tested a novel story-based instruction that models how scientists achieve through failures and struggles. We designed this instruction to challenge this belief, thereby improving science learning in classroom settings. A demographically diverse group of 402 9th and 10th grade students read 1 of 3 types of stories about eminent scientists that described how the scientists: (a) struggled intellectually (e.g., made mistakes in investigating scientific problems, and overcome the mistakes through effort), (b) struggled in their personal life (e.g., suffered family poverty and lack of parental support but overcame it), or (c) made great discoveries (a control condition, similar to the instructional material that appears in many science textbooks, that did not describe any struggles). Results showed that participation in either of the struggle story conditions improved science learning postintervention, relative to that of students in the control condition. Additionally, the effect of our intervention was more pronounced for low-performing students. Moreover, far more students in either of the struggle story conditions felt connected to the stories and scientists than did students in the control condition. The use of struggle stories provides a promising and implementable instructional approach that can improve student motivation and academic performance in
What I learned...

Writing is a process

Editing is a process.

Even For Bob

Frustration Is A Process and Bob’s Frustration Becomes More Precise Over Time.

PROCESS MATTERS!!!
Writing Is Like Gift Wrap:
It Can Make Your Ideas Look Good or Bad…

A Precise Wisdom I Learned From Bob:

bad
writing
sucks
A General Take Home Message:

Clear thinking becomes clear writing; one can't exist without the other.

William Zinsser

A General Take Home Message:
Motivation Matters…
A Personal Wish

Especially For XD… Pls. Sign Up!

To My Husband…

Men of few words are the best men.

~ William Shakespeare

Thank you, Bob, for being my mentor, writing police, argumentation trainer… & for being so precise about your frustration
We All Got What We Want…

You Had a Best Man as Your Mentor, & I Married a Best Man and Kids and Grandkids Got Their Best Dad and Grandpa---According To:

~ William Shakespeare

Acknowledgement

Thank you, Patrick Lemaire

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Bob did not edit this talk!

All errors made in this talk are those of Xd’s only and do not reflect Bob’s writing or editing.

Correspondence concerning this talks should be addressed to….

The End