7. *Choosing Effective Examples and Analogies*

SUGGESTED COURSE EXTENSIONS

A. Reviewing

1. In a journal article in your field,

    a. Circle all analogies or metaphors used to illustrate quantitative patterns or relationships.
        i. Does the author explicitly or implicitly convey the purpose of each analogy or metaphor, or is it left unclear?
        ii. Is it easy to understand the analogy and the pattern or relationship it is intended to illustrate?
    b. Choose one unclear analogy from the paper and revise it, using the principles in chapter 7 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis, 2nd Edition*.
    c. Are there other places in the article where an analogy or metaphor would be helpful? Identify the purpose of the analogy or metaphor for each such situation.
    d. Design an analogy or metaphor to suit one instance where you have suggested adding one (from part c), using the principles in chapter 7.
    e. Identify the intended audience for the article. Choose a different audience (e.g., more quantitatively sophisticated; younger) and rewrite one analogy to suit them.

2. In the same article, circle all numeric examples where a single number is reported (e.g., not a comparison of two or more numbers). For each, indicate whether the author conveys the purpose of the example (e.g., whether it is a typical or unusual value).

3. In the same article, circle all numeric contrasts.

    a. Indicate whether in each instance the author provides enough information for you to assess whether it is a realistic difference or change for the research question and context.
    b. Evaluate whether different or additional size contrasts would be useful for the intended audience, considering
        i. plausibility;
        ii. real-world application;
        iii. measurement issues.

c. Identify an audience that would be interested in different applications than the audience for whom the article is currently written. Describe how you would select numeric contrasts to meet their interests.

B. Writing and Revising

1. For each of the following audiences, devise an analogy to describe one of the main numeric patterns or relationships in the results section of your paper, using the criteria in chapter 7 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis, 2nd Edition*.

   a. Readers of a leading journal in your field
   b. Undergraduate students in an intermediate-level substantive course in your field
   c. Readers of the popular press, assuming an eighth-grade reading level
   d. Exchange your answers to parts a through c with someone studying writing about a different topic or data. Peer-edit each other's work and revise according to the feedback you receive.

2. Repeat questions A.1 through A.3 for a paper you have written previously.