

## **DARNELL LANE | STUDY**

I am on a search to discover lesser known facts and overlooked details of an object, person, or subject. In my quest, I utilize my hands to feel for the smoothness of the object, my nose to detect a foul or pleasant aroma, from the object. I use my ears to identify sounds of different decibels associated with the object. I use my eyes to notate color, size, shape, and other geometric configurations, and, if the object is edible, I use my tastebuds to know whether the object is sweet, sour, or bland. These are a few of the steps required when a person wants to know any facts or details of an object.

Study, on the other hand, is the purposeful action of looking intently at or listening to something or someone for a deeper understanding. Study is the discipline employed when seeking to discover lesser known facts, people, or objects.

Paper, for instance, is an example of an object that requires a distinct set of actions to know with certainty composition, weight, and origin. We all know paper is a product of trees but do we all know what trees? Do we know which tree produces which kind of paper? Do we know what is the process that converts tree pulp into paper? Is the process the same for the different varieties of paper? These are just a few of the questions that come to mind when I think about paper, and there are possibly many more. As a layman, I don't have knowledge necessary to satisfactorily answer any of my own questions. But someone who has studied paper and the paper making process will have answers that would satisfy anyone's queries about paper. She would know the tree of origin, where on Earth these trees are located, the different paper making processes for each type of paper, and even more knowledge because she would have embarked on an intentional and purposeful study of paper and could possibly inform you on the subject of wood.

We have the finished product in our hands. We can feel its texture, know its weight, its color, aroma, and know that paper is not edible.

These are all tangible characteristics of paper, but we don't have the deeper knowledge of the paper "expert".

People are possibly the most widely studied population around the world. Think of the many “experts” and fields of expertise that are devoted to life, human anatomy, and mental health. As people are the most studied they, too, maybe the most misconstrued population as well. Police officers are a widely misconstrued population because the context of a person’s initial encounter, with the police, play a big role in how the police officer is perceived both on a personal basis and as a public servant. If the initial encounter is one of contention, say a police involved shooting, and the subsequent protest and the officer is hostile towards or dismissive of the person, then that person will have a negative idea of the officer as a public servant and as a human being. If the initial encounter, with the police, is one of help, say a lost pet or missing person and the encounter ends positively, that person will have a positive idea of the officer(s) involved both personally and professionally. But, truthfully, neither encounter is intimate or personal enough for a person to claim she/he knows any police officer and secondly, police officers are more than their uniforms or their actions as public servants. To know a person takes more than one chance encounter because people are complex, layered beings. Opinions can be formed from an initial encounter, but it takes prolonged continual contact and different contexts to really know a person be it a police officer, janitor, mailman, or neighbor. In most initial contacts what a person forms is a stereotype of the person as a police officer, their ability to perform their duty, and incidentally the character of the human being who is a police officer, and more importantly, these stereotypes are wrong about the person and the professional. How do you think a person in a police officer’s family would describe the officer? They would describe him/her from the perspective of the knowledge they had of the person before he/she became a police officer and whose depiction of the officer would be most close to the officer’s true character? When it comes to people, context plays the greatest role in how a person is characterized and how others suppose they know him/her.

Study requires discipline and the ability to apply different concepts, contexts, and applications to know with certainty obscure facts and knowledge of a person, object, or subject. The intentional act of study is purposeful and necessary when seeking to be an “expert” on subjects, persons, or in a chosen profession.

*Darnell Lane is a graduate of NEIU and an intern with PRAXIS Structural Justice Group at the University of Chicago.*

*He's an advocate of incorporating the voices of youth in conversations about trauma, healing, political motivation, and social upheaval. Darnell is also a great speller.*