

CULTIVATING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN WRITING: THE ETHICAL USE OF MODELS AND TEMPLATES TO MENTOR STUDENT WRITERS

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Presentation Description

Providing students with templates and writing samples to communicate instructor expectations produces strong, ethical writers. After a discussion of the ethics of using mentor texts and templates, a writing coach will model their use; participants can experience their potential through demonstration, writing, and conversation.

Presentation Summary

As a high school junior and senior, Patti Tylka studied shorthand. This business course was recommended for female students who were expected to become secretaries in a time before technology gave us Dictaphones and, later, computers. Patti never used her shorthand skills for taking dictation in the business world, but she doesn't consider it a waste of time. During those two years, Patti listened (and transcribed) hundreds of business letters. She learned the language formats, the templates, used in business communication, and this helped her as she developed into a writer.

Most academic writing follows a pattern, but many of our students have not experienced that pattern. They don't have the background experience that would help them navigate academic writing; many of them arrive at college knowing only how to write a five-paragraph argument. An instructor who provides a writing template gives his students training wheels to help them get going; the templates provide a support that helps students gain balance, learn to steer, move forward, and gain confidence.

A template is a framework. Instructors can set up a template to match an assignment, providing a brain-friendly scaffold for student work. Like training wheels, a writing template provides parameters that allow the student to move forward. It lets the student build his essay following the expected framework of the discipline or assignment. Once the student finds success with the disciplinary writing style, the template is no longer needed, and, like training wheels, should be removed.

Several examples of templates were provided and discussed:

- APA and MLA page formats

- Analytical essay outline
- Argumentative essay outline
- Compare or Contrast essay outline
- Expository Essay
- Persuasive essay outline
- Reflective essay outline
- Research paper outline
- CARS (Creating a Research Space) introduction
- CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) paragraph
- MEL-Con (Main idea, evidence, link to topic, conclusion sentence) paragraph
- They Say/I Say (Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Norton, 2006.)