Are Dogs Better Than Cats?: Teaching Oral & Written Persuasion Skills

Sara Mathis
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, sara.mathis@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp_expo
Part of the Communication Commons, and the Higher Education and Teaching Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp_expo/13
## Are Dogs Better Than Cats?: Teaching Oral & Written Persuasion Skills

### Dr. Sara Mathis, Department of Communication Studies

**Rationale:**
First generation students often come into UNLV underprepared for the rigors of speaking and writing. Student’s success in their courses and future careers depend on their abilities to persuade through oral and written skills.

### Tool: C-E-R Model
The Claim-Evidence-Reasoning model asks students to:
1. **Make a Claim:** A statement of a student’s understanding about a phenomenon. (Thesis and Topic Sentences)
2. **Provide Evidence:** Use sufficient, appropriate, and scholarly research to support claim. (Supporting Examples)
3. **Demonstrate Reasoning:** Ties together the claim and the evidence through reasoning by example, analogy, authority, cause, or correlation. (Justification)

### Example:
Students take an instructor made outline of a persuasive essay or speech and through reverse engineering, build the argumentative components into a visual outline.

### Teacher Observations:
1. Students distinguish better between informative speaking/writing vs. persuasive oralwritten skills.
2. Arguments made by students are more complete, logical, and thorough.
3. Students make more sophisticated arguments.
4. Students feel more confident turning their opinions into arguments.

### Student Comments:
- The C-E-R model taught me how to make an argument I can support when my ideas conflict with others.
- I use this method any time I have to write a paper or make a presentation.
- The C-E-R model is easy to remember and follow—not like formal reasoning models
- I get better grades when I apply this model to the speeches I give in my other classes.

### First-generation students:
Approximately 60% of freshman enrollees across Southern Nevada are first generation students of varying skill levels. The C-E-R model can be scaffolded for all writing and speaking levels. This is beneficial because professors can meet students at the level they are at and use the model to advance their skills.

### Readings on C-E-R:
- www.activatelearning.com/claim-evidence-reasoning/

### Instructions:
- Use a fun warm up exercise like the murder mystery called Slip or Trip?
- Students make a claim about who the killer is, find evidence for that claim, and develop reasoning that demonstrates how the evidence supports the claim.

### Who can implement?
This works for any area of study, humanities to the sciences, where the instructor wants their students to develop sound, researched, reasoned arguments that can be used to persuade a reader or audience.

### Consider using:
1. the same argument for every group so that you can help students work through each step and talk through the processes at the basic level.
2. different arguments for each group so they follow the instructions, but must concentrate on building their own argument. Then each group can debrief how they put their argument together.
3. incomplete packets delivered to each group. The students will try to piece together an argument, but realize that they have partial arguments. The students must figure out that they need to work together to formulate a complete argument. (This is called the Jigsaw and should be used for more complex arguments).

### Adaptations
Based on type and skill level of your class.

### Source
The entire assignment is available at: [https://www.scribd.com/document/366900059/Are-Dogs-Better-Than-Cats](https://www.scribd.com/document/366900059/Are-Dogs-Better-Than-Cats) or contact Sara Mathis at sara.mathis@unlv.edu