


# 2023 TIP Winner

# Lettersmith: A Writing Support Tool That Provides Structured Guidance and Encourages Metacognition

A stylized, light blue leaf-like graphic with a central vein and several smaller branches extending from it, positioned in the upper right corner of the slide.

Julie Hui

School of Information

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*\* Lettersmith is developed in partnership with the **Center for Academic Innovation** and its team of designers, developers, behavioral scientists, and researchers.*

# Motivation for the Project

- Majority of existing writing support tools do little to guide the cognitive processes of learning how to write.
- Professional writing is challenging to teach in the classroom because so much of it is learned through context-specific observation.
- Instructors and career counselors often attend to hundreds of students at a time, limiting their capacity to provide individual guidance.

# What is the project?

- Lettersmith is a writing support tool that provides structured guidance via *shared annotations* and *annotated model texts*.
- Lettersmith encourages metacognition in an effort to improve writing quality and writer confidence.
- The tool was originally developed to help writers communicate more effectively with clients and professionals, and has since expanded to other forms of writing.

Checklist ?

\* Required

**How to Tag:** Highlight your writing and then select the appropriate tag below to properly tag your draft.

 **Business Letter Heading \*** ✕

Include your contact information and the company representative's contact information.

 **Specific Salutation \*** ✕

Address to a specific person when possible (e.g. Dear Ms./Mr./Dr.). When you can't find an individual, use a title (e.g. Dear Hiring Manager, Dear Internship Coordinator). Avoid using, "To whom it may concern".

 **Target position** ✕

State what position you are applying for.

**Connection**

If possible or relevant, state how learned about the position. At a career fair? Through a WCC club

My Draft 24 Words | Tag View: On[Feedback Link](#)

## Inquiry about Data Analyst Position

September 1, 2022

Angela Lee  
456 Fall St.

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am thrilled to apply to the position of Data Analyst at Opportunity Inc...

**B** *I* U | H<sub>1</sub> H<sub>2</sub> | | |

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Examples are to be used for reflection, not direct copying.

## Interest in Systems Engineering Position

January 1, 2021

Mark Atabal  
123 Summer Rd.  
Ypsilanti, MI 45567

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am delighted to be applying for the System Engineer position at NewTech Software. I met representatives from NewTech at the WCC Career Fair in November where I came to learn about the XYZ System. NewTech's focus to more efficiently serve customers, I would be excited to leverage my technical skills to join this team and increase your tremendous value for customers.

As a student volunteer for WCC's IT Help Desk, I have health with various technical challenges and engaged with a wide range of users. This experience has given me a great deal of knowledge concerning all of the things that go into software development and the maintenance, functioning and protection of computer systems and networks. My experience assisting users with their technical issues has also helped me develop the interpersonal skills needed to work with clients and peers. In this position, I uncovered various bugs with the school-wide systems and learned to write Quality Assurance reports.

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Lettersmith | Cover Letter Examples

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# Outcomes: Students

## Without Lettersmith

Hello Ms. [Name],

As part of our final Capstone project, we would like to request an initial meeting with you to discuss the upcoming project with [organization]. If possible, can you please let us know your availability from October 8th to October 10th? We look forward to meeting you and working with [organization] throughout this year.

Regards,  
[Name]

## With Lettersmith

Dear Mr. [Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Name] and I am joined by my team [Name], [Name], and [Name]. We are all students in the User Experience Design Capstone Project course at [School].

We are very excited to be working with your organization, [Name]! We are especially interested in this project because of your dedication to the community as a non-profit to inspire and educate others about organic gardening! We would like to schedule an initial meeting with you sometime this week to further discuss what we can do for you. We are available to meet Tuesday 2:30pm - 4pm, Thursday 7pm - 8:30pm, and all day Friday. However, if those times do not work for you, please share your availability and we will meet at your convenience. If an in-person meeting doesn't work with your schedule we can use Skype or Google Hangouts for this meeting as well.

Thank you for sharing your project with [School]. We are very much looking forward to working with you for the next eight months.

Sincerely,  
[Name]  
[Name], [Name], [Name]

*“If we didn't have Lettersmith, we probably wouldn't have written an email similar to this, we probably would have just said, ‘Hi, we'd love to meet’ and not really like have the full agenda... It made us like have to become more prepared for the meeting.”*

*- Student*



# Outcomes: Instructors

*“One of the things that I found really useful was that I could look at what students were tagging and try to kind of understand how each of them was grasping those individual concepts about writing. So, for example, I had one student who was continuously tagging what was actually the main argument of their writing as context, and so we were able to have a conversation. . . I could look at [their writing] and say all right, there’s a fundamental misconception.”*

*-Instructor*

# Outcomes: Instructors

*“I think using Lettersmith has definitely improved my approach to teaching cover letters, because it has forced me to really think about all of these different components and defining them in really clear terms.”*

*-Instructor*