

Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) Questions & Answers (Q&A)

What is the best way to introduce the ERWC at a high school?

There are many ways to approach adoption of the ERWC as a college-preparatory course at grade twelve; however, we recommend a process that gives teachers the opportunity to learn about the course and use the materials prior to formal adoption. One such sequence might include the following steps:

- Selected teachers attend the ERWC professional learning workshop series (20 hours).
- Teachers learn about the course by teaching selected ERWC modules within their existing courses.
- Teachers examine the effects of the ERWC modules on students and teaching and consider adoption.
- Other teachers attend the professional development to build a cadre of interested and certified teachers.
- Department considers adoption of the ERWC.
- The Department recommends the course to the appropriate administrators for adoption.
- School administrators submit the course for approval to school district administrators following appropriate local processes.
- School administrators submit application for adoption to the CSU and upload the course into UC Doorways.
- Teachers, campuses, or districts establish forums for ongoing reflection, discussion, and support as related to the ERWC implementation.

Should the ERWC be the default English course at the senior level?

We recommend that ERWC be among the courses offered to seniors at every high school. A range of course offerings at the senior level is necessary to prepare all students for postsecondary options. In addition to the ERWC, these offerings should include Advanced Placement English, International Baccalaureate English, or other courses as appropriate. Other courses could include, British literature, world literature, composition, English language development, etc.

Implementation of the ERWC is most successful when there is consensus within the department about course offerings and alternatives. Schools should consider the balance of literary and informational text—as articulated in the California Common Core State Standards—over the four years of high school students’ experience in English Language Arts and other disciplines.

What should we know about the second edition of the ERWC?

The second edition of the CSU Expository Reading and Writing Course will be released during the May 2013 ERWC Leader Certification meeting.

- The Assignment Template has been revised and aligned to the Common Core State Standards.
- Ten modules have been updated with new readings and revised; three new modules have been developed.
- New appendices and ancillary materials have been developed, including articles on formative assessment and teaching for transfer and engagement.
- *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* has been revised and expanded to two semesters. It will be provided within the Semester One and Two binders rather than as a separate publication.

The revised curriculum will include the following modules:

Semester One

- Introducing Students to the ERWC (new)
 1. What's Next? Thinking About Life After High School (new module)
 2. Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page (two new texts in addition to the original texts)
 3. Racial Profiling (new text)
 4. The Value of Life (three new texts, two original texts, new life value calculators)
 5. Good Food/Bad Food (previously title Fast Food; all new texts)
 6. Into the Wild

Semester Two

1. Bring a Text You Like to Class: Bridging Out-of-School and In-School Literacies
 2. Juvenile Justice (two original texts and three new texts)
 3. Language, Gender, and Culture (one original text and four new texts)
 4. 1984
 5. Brave New World (Teachers may opt to teach either novel, *1984* or *Brave New World*)
 6. Bullying: A Research Project (two new texts and 10 original texts)
- Final Reflection: The ERWC Portfolio (new, one to two days)

The following modules have been retired and will be archived in the ERWC Online Community: Left Hand of Darkness, Justice: Childhood Love Lessons, and Going for the Look. The module, The Last Meow, has been revised and moved to grade eleven.

How can literature be integrated with the ERWC?

The CSU and UC expect that students will read and write in response to both literary and informational texts.

- The ERWC has always contained some literary texts.
- The new version will include *1984* and *Brave New World*.
- Both of the new literary modules use the ERWC Assignment Template to sequence instructional activities.
- The Assignment Template can be used to plan instruction for literary texts that can be integrated into other English courses
- Thematic connections between literary and expository texts help students think about both kinds of texts more productively.
- A new appendix, “Teaching Literature Rhetorically” will be available with the new course.

How can the ERWC be integrated with other disciplines?

The California Common Core State Standards emphasize the role of literacy in other disciplines.

- Several of the modules (grades seven through eleven) would be appropriate for content areas other than English (e.g., science, history, political science, sociology, environmental science, philosophy).
- The Assignment Template can be used to plan instruction for texts from other disciplines.
- The Literacy Standards for History-Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects can be addressed by using the Assignment Template to create new content specific modules.

How does the ERWC implement California’s Common Core State Standards

The ERWC is fully aligned with the CCCSS. Some examples include focus on informational text, text-based evidence, argument, collaborative conversations, critical thinking and analysis, and more.

What constitutes an “approved” ERWC course for maintaining an exemption in the senior year?

The course should:

- Be taught by a certified ERWC teacher who has completed 20 hours of the ERWC professional learning;
- Be an approved course, which has been through the appropriate CSU adoption process and has been uploaded into UC Doorways;
- Contain all of the designated ERWC modules, including the two full-length works; and

- Implement all essential features of ERWC including the range of rhetorical reading activities, including critical thinking questions, integration of reading and writing, and substantial writing assignments.

How much flexibility is there in teaching the ERWC?

Teacher professionalism is valued in the implementation of the ERWC.

- Modules are designed so that teachers can make choices about which activities their students need based on formative assessments (formal and informal) that occur throughout each of the modules.
- However, rhetorical reading activities, critical thinking questions, integration of reading and writing, and substantial writing assignments are essential features of the ERWC and should not be omitted.
- Suggestions are provided for scaffolding instruction for ELs.

What about using the ERWC modules at earlier grade levels?

To preserve the integrity of the full ERWC offered at the senior level and to increase the number of students who earn College Ready and Conditionally Ready designations on the EAP test, twenty new modules have been developed for grades seven through eleven—four per grade. The titles are the following:

Grade Seven

1. What It Takes to Be Great
2. Tap vs. Bottled Water
3. Helicopter Parents—Help or Hindrance
4. The Impact of Celebrities

Grade Ten

1. In Pursuit of Unhappiness
2. River Rights: Whose Water Is It?
3. Leopard Man
4. Age of Responsibility

Grade Eight

1. Social Networking or Antisocial Networking
2. When is Lying Okay?
3. Robots in School
4. The Construction of a College Experience

Grade Eleven

1. Island Civilization
2. To Clone or Not to Clone
3. Violence in the Media
4. The Last Meow

Grade Nine

1. Hip Hop Goes Global
2. The Undercover Parent
3. Extreme Sports: What's the Deal?
4. Threatening Stereotypes

Modules for Grades Nine through Eleven. These new modules will be made available to teachers in grades nine through eleven at regularly scheduled ERWC workshops for high school teachers. Teachers will receive the modules on a flash drive; print copies will not be provided.

The modules also will be available in the ERWC Online Community (as copyright permissions are obtained).

Professional Learning for Teachers in Grades Seven through Eight. The CSU Chancellor’s Office and the Executive Committee of CISC (Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee of the CA County Superintendents Educational Services Association) have agreed to general parameters for offering cost-recovery professional learning for teachers at the middle school level. The structure would allow county offices of education, CSU campuses, school districts, and California Subject Matter Projects to offer professional learning for grades seven through eight provided that all provisions of the CSU/CISC agreement are met.

How is the course taught most effectively?

Professional learning workshops and a variety of professional readings illustrate effective teaching of the ERWC. As articulated and explored more fully in “Transfer and Engagement: from Theory to Enhanced Practice,” the ERWC “was designed with a particular purpose—to help students develop the strategies and habits of mind to support success in college reading and writing and lifelong learning.” Achieving this purpose entails an approach to the curriculum which emphasizes “teaching students reading and writing strategies that they can *transfer* to future occasions for reading and writing. While such transfer can happen naturally with sufficient experience and practice in a variety of contexts, teachers using the ERWC materials have found that they can facilitate transfer by addressing it specifically in their planning and teaching of the materials.” We offer the following, additional suggestions for teachers:

- The Teacher’s Version of each module provides many suggestions for activities. Teachers should read the Teacher’s Version of the module in its entirety before beginning to teach it.
- The appendices to the course materials and online resources provide in-depth explanations and further resources.
- The modules have been thoughtfully designed and piloted, and they have been revised according to feedback from teachers in the classroom. If activities are omitted or modified, it should be for sound pedagogical reasons.
- The reading activities have for the most part been backward mapped from the writing assignments. Teachers should keep the writing assignment in mind, and scaffold appropriately for student success.
- Formative assessments, both formal and informal, should be used to make decisions about pacing, future activities, level of scaffolding, etc.
- Questions or problems can be posted to the ERWC Community Web site for consultation with other teachers.

What is “Program Status” anyway?

“Program Status” was granted to the CSU for the ERWC in 2006.

- UC determines what courses it will accept to qualify for admission to their system in the form of what are known as the “a-g” requirements. The CSU system accepts the same courses for admission.
- For English, the course must qualify to meet the “b” requirements in order to count as senior English. The “b” requirements are as follows:
 - Four units (equivalent to four year-long courses or eight semesters) of college preparatory composition and literature are required. Both reading and writing components must be included in the courses.
 - Reading. Acceptable courses must require extensive reading of a variety of literary genres, including classical and/or contemporary works. Reading assignments must include full-length works. Excerpts from anthologies, articles, etc., can be supplemental but cannot constitute the main component of reading assignments.
 - Writing. Courses must also require substantial, recurrent practice in writing extensive, structured papers. Student must demonstrate understanding of rhetorical, grammatical, and syntactical patterns, forms, and structures through responding to texts of varying lengths in unassisted writing assignments.
- The first edition of the ERWC course was approved by UC to count as senior English. In addition, the CSU was granted “Program Status” which permits the CSU to approve high schools to adopt the course. Under “Program Status” teachers must participate in ERWC professional learning in order to be certified to teach the course. The advantage of “Program Status” is that schools can upload the course directly to UC Doorways without seeking separate approval from UC. With the second edition of the course, renewal of “Program Status” is not required; however, the revised course was submitted to UC for review and approval was granted on March 15, 2013.

What is the i3 grant?

In partnership with the Fresno County Office of Education, the ERWC was awarded a prestigious, federal Investing in Innovation (i3) Development Grant. The project has given us the opportunity to revise existing ERWC modules, create new modules, correlate the ERWC curriculum to California’s Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, and further develop the ERWC professional learning. Beginning in 2013-14, more extensive research on the efficacy of ERWC implementation will be conducted. The rigorous, quasi-experimental research study being funded by this grant will assess the impact of the curriculum on students during their senior year of high school and into their second year of college. The results of this study will guide our efforts in professional learning and support of curriculum implementation for many years to come.