ERWC Intensive
Scaffolding Writing Instruction

Start Date: February 14, 2025
End Date: February 15, 2025
Modality: Online

Course Overview

Deepen your understanding of how to scaffold writing instruction

Our students have a lot to say. Many of them share their ideas readily in class, but even those who don't do so speak their minds in the hallways and lunchrooms of our campuses, and in their lives outside of school. Yet when we ask them to write their ideas, they sometimes struggle. Although our students are also skilled problem solvers in many areas of their lives, they may not immediately apply those problem-solving skills to the writing we ask them to do in our classes. And while many of us teach students about "the writing process," there is no one writing process, and students need our help to figure out what processes to use in different situations. If we can take advantage of students' ideas and problem-solving skills, we can help them engage more productively and joyfully in our classes.

In order to answer the question, What is the best way to scaffold student learning of writing, we must first consider what it is we are supporting. Too often, as English teachers, we focus our attention on the **facts** of the **forms** we want students to create: it must have so many <u>paragraphs;</u> it must have a <u>thesis statement</u>; each paragraph should begin with a <u>topic sentence</u>; each paragraph should include so many sentences; there should be two sentences of <u>commentary</u> for every <u>concrete detail;</u> and so on. That approach leads to providing students assignment prompts full of such details and scaffolds that heavily lean toward outlines and graphic organizers.

George Hillocks, in *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice*, suggested a different approach that he called inquiry and his students called a structured process approach to teaching writing. In this model, we begin by considering the **process** of creating the **content** of the genres we are asking students to create. Such an approach requires analyzing genres to understand the problem solving that writers engage in to create those genres and imagining the processes such writers actually go through as they compose. Scaffolding in this model focuses on small-group activities that help students practice and then articulate the procedures they use to generate and develop ideas. There are several advantages to the latter approach.

1. It helps students develop metacognition as they articulate their problem-solving processes in conversation.
2. It focuses on transferable knowledge/skill, the procedures that writers use to solve rhetorical writing problems in any genre.
3. It draws on students' prior knowledge of problem solving and encourages them to apply that in academic situations.
4. It is highly social.

5. It develops habits that more closely match what professional writers do when they write.
6. It can lead to students producing more content for their writing tasks.

In this two-day professional learning session for certified ERWC teachers, participants will experience and then learn about a framework for teaching writing that focuses on helping students develop the *content* of their writing. The approach, sometimes called a "structured process approach" to writing instruction, helps students learn the *procedures* for developing their ideas and writing those ideas through small-group problem-solving activities. After a session of engaging with activities to write your own philosophy of teaching writing, you will reflect on the activities you experienced and learn about the theory behind the activities, exploring how your knowledge of that framework can help you make the most of—and modify as necessary—the activities in ERWC modules. You'll also learn to develop your own problem-solving activities to help students learn about and improve their writing.

What You Get:

- A framework for analyzing writing tasks to prepare to scaffold writing instruction
- Ideas for group activities to support writing instruction
- Alternatives to formulaic writing

Professional Learning Outcomes
At the end of this course, participants will be able to

1. Distinguish between inductive and deductive strategies for composing.
2. Infer their own philosophies of teaching writing based on their practices.
3. Evaluate their teaching practices in light of their preferred philosophies of teaching writing.
4. Analyze writing tasks in terms of six kinds of knowledge.
5. Evaluate pre-writing and writing activities in terms of their relationship to six kinds of knowledge.
6. Frame instructional decisions in terms of the kind of knowledge a particular activity should emphasize.

Topics & Schedule

- **This two-day workshop focuses on engaging in activities as a student/writer (day 1) and framing that experience based on theory, applying that theory to instructional decision making (day 2).**

About

California State University's Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) is a research-based literacy and language program that has been proven to have a statistically significant impact on students' academic preparation in randomized-control trials.