

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Investing in Innovation Development Grant

From Rhetoric to College Readiness: The Expository Reading and Writing Course

A. Need for the Project	1
1. Exceptional Approach to i3 Priorities	1
2. Gaps in Services and Opportunities the Project Will Address	4
3. Likely Positive Impact of the Proposed Project	7
B. Quality of the Project Design	9
1. Goals Strategies, and Actions Aligned to Priorities to Achieve Results	9
2. Cost Estimates	14
3. Costs Are Reasonable	15
4. Incorporation of Project into Ongoing Work at the End of the Grant	16
C. Quality of Project Evaluation	17
1. Implementation Data, Performance Feedback, and Periodic Assessment of Progress Toward Achieving the Intended Outcomes	19
2. Evaluation Information to Facilitate Further Development	20
3. Sufficient Resources to Evaluate the Project Effectively	21
D. Quality of the Management Plan	21
1. Adequacy of the Plan to Achieve Objectives on Time and Within Budget	21
2. Qualifications, Training, and Experience of Project Director and Key Personnel	22

From Rhetoric to College Readiness: The Expository Reading and Writing Course

A.1. NEED FOR THE PROJECT: Exceptional Approach to i3 Priorities. Each fall on campuses throughout the California State University (CSU) system, almost one-half of high school graduates face the shock and disillusionment of discovering that their reading and writing skills are insufficient to successfully accomplish the academic tasks they face in their first-year of college. These students find that they may not be eligible to take credit-bearing courses in English and therefore must remediate. For two decades the CSU has attempted to reduce the need for remediation in English for these students. Among the many programs designed to address this need, the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) is the most promising—representing an **exceptional approach** to implementing **high standards (Absolute Priority 3)** and promoting **college access and success (Competitive Preference Priority 7)** for all students, including **English Language Learners (Competitive Preference Priority 8)**.

The ERWC curriculum is **innovative** across a number of dimensions: it integrates reading and writing focusing on debatable and engaging themes and texts that students find motivating; it uses concepts from Aristotelian rhetoric¹ to make it powerful and purposeful for students and teachers alike; it integrates effective reading and writing pedagogy into patterns of instruction that teachers quickly grasp and implement; it provides instructional scaffolding that helps a range of students succeed in reading and writing sophisticated texts and concepts; and it creates an

¹ Aristotle says that *Rhetoric* is “the art of finding the available means of persuasion.” He defines three categories of rhetorical appeal: *ethos*, the presentation of the character and authority of the speaker; *logos*, the use of words and arguments; and *pathos*, the appeal to the emotions of the audience. These categories form the basis of rhetorical analysis in the ERWC, and combined with other strategies, they give students a feeling of power over, and engagement with, the text.

environment in which the opinions of teachers and students are both sought and respected. Emphasizing rhetorical strategies to analyze and produce texts makes students feel that they are part of the conversation. The course developers theorize that “even a little bit of rhetoric opens the door, and shows the way in, for a practice congenial to deliberative democracy.”

Originally created by a task force of university and high school educators as a part of the CSU’s Early Assessment Program² in 2004, the ERWC was designed to improve the academic literacy of high school seniors in preparation for college. The course was piloted for several years, revised in response, and published in 2008. Approved by the University of California and the CSU as a year-long college-preparatory English course in 2006, students in schools that choose to offer the ERWC may take the course as their core English class in twelfth grade. Based mainly on non-fiction texts, the course emphasizes the in-depth study of expository, analytical, and argumentative reading and writing. The curriculum contains 14 modules divided into two semesters. Each module is structured by a central Assignment Template composed of a sequence of integrated reading and writing experiences that begin with prereading activities, move into reading and postreading activities, and continue through informal and formal writing assignments. Students learn to make predictions about their reading, analyze rhetorical structures, properly cite text and avoid plagiarism, and make and evaluate claims and the evidence used to justify those claims. See Appendix J for a list of modules and course excerpts. The ERWC is disseminated through professional development jointly sponsored by the CSU system and county offices of education throughout the state. The **Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE)**, which is the **local education agency applicant** for this **i3 Development Grant**, has successfully led ERWC professional development in California’s Central Valley region since 2004.

² See Appendix J for background information on California’s Early Assessment Program.

In addressing **Absolute Priority 3**, the ERWC **complements the implementation of high standards**—both the recently adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (2010) and the prior English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools (1997)—by emphasizing the frequently under-taught areas of expository (or informational) text and argumentation in reading, writing, and speaking. College faculty raised concerns about student readiness, saying “the lack of analytical reading skills contributes to students’ lack of success in a course” (ICAS 2002, p18) and that “only about one-third of the students are sufficiently prepared for the two most frequently assigned writing tasks: analyzing information or arguments and synthesizing information from several sources” (ICAS 2002, p. 23). The ERWC was created in response to those concerns with the goal of preparing students to read, write, and think at levels needed to achieve **college success and completion (Competitive Preference Priority 7)**. Aligned early on with both college-level expectations and content standards, the curriculum is an even better match with the Common Core State Standards emphasizing a range of text complexity and argumentative writing. In order to achieve high standards and success in college, students need to develop literate identities and academic agency. ERWC helps adolescents accomplish this by building task persistence and competence through engaging module topics, such as racial profiling, fast food, and juvenile justice, and appropriate instructional scaffolds. Coupled with the focus on rhetoric and critical thinking—the “real-work” of college and adults—ERWC is for many adolescents the first time they will adopt academic identities and see themselves as potentially successful college students.

Modifications of the ERWC curriculum based on the English-Language Development Standards for California Public Schools (2002) have recently been created to help teachers modify their instruction to **address the unique learning needs of English language learners** who

range from the intermediate to advanced levels of English proficiency (**Competitive Preference Priority 8**). In addition, the first semester of the course is supplemented by text-based grammar lessons. Unique in its rhetorical approach to grammar, the *Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing* (Ching, 2008) uses curriculum readings and students' own writings to build competence in writing conventions and rhetorical power in language use. Taken together the existing text-based grammar supplement and the new document, *Modifying the ERWC Assignment Template for English Learners at the Intermediate and Early Advanced Levels*, provide significant resources to teachers to support students acquiring academic English.

With all of its potential, the ERWC needs support to be brought to scale effectively in California and the nation. With this i3 application, the FCOE proposes to partner with the CSU and others to **1) expand, update, and refine the curriculum; 2) increase the scope and effectiveness of professional development; 3) establish up to 100 intensive implementation sites** in Fresno County and elsewhere in the state for 3,000 students, including English language learners; and **4) investigate the effects of the ERWC program** on students' reading and writing skills using a rigorous, quasi-experimental research design. Working collaboratively with high school teachers, CSU and community college faculty will develop curriculum and professional learning improvements under the leadership of the FCOE, the CSU Center for the Advancement of Reading, and the ERWC Advisory Committee. County office of education and school district specialists in English language arts, as well as higher education faculty in English, literacy, and teacher education, will provide advanced professional development and coaching to teachers at identified implementation sites.

A.2. Gaps in Services and Opportunities the Project Will Address. Too many students enter college unprepared for the work they will be asked to do in reading, writing, and thinking.

Students who **enter college needing remediation** are not eligible to enroll in credit bearing or transfer-level courses and therefore **lack the opportunity** to avoid additional costs for non-credit bearing classes. These **high need students** risk not transferring to a four-year college or completing a four-year degree. Rates of remediation nationwide for students entering four-year and two-year public colleges are estimated at 29% and 43% respectively (Strong American Schools, 2008). In California 49.3% or 23,602 of first-year, regularly-admitted students entering the CSU were identified in fall 2010 as needing remediation in English even though their mean high school GPA was 3.21 (compared to 3.43 for proficient students). In the counties targeted by this project (Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino), the **magnitude** of the problem is greater than the system as a whole. At CSU East Bay 70.5% (721) of entering students were identified in fall 2010 as needing remediation; at CSU Fresno 63.2% (1,647); CSU Los Angeles 78.2% (1,495); CSU Dominguez Hills 82.9% (824), and CSU San Bernardino 68.9% (1,134) (www.asd.calstate.edu/remediation/10/index.shtml).

Not only is the problem of remediation one of tremendous size, but the problem differentially impacts **underrepresented minorities**. Fall 2010 data indicate that the need for remediation among underrepresented groups in the CSU system was much greater than for the 28.2% of Whites. More specifically, 69.4% (1,638) of African Americans, 44.1% (60) of Native Americans, 63.7% (10,908) of Mexican Americans and other Latinos, and 54.5% (4,488) of Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos were identified as needing remediation in fall 2010. When compared to systemwide enrollments, the gaps represented by these remediation statistics are stark. Systemwide enrollment by ethnicity in fall 2010 for first-year students was 5.5% African American (2,594); 0.3% Native American (141); 37.4% Mexican American and other Latino (17,791); 17.3% Asian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino (8,239); and 29.5% White (14,008).

Many students from the target counties are also **language minority students**. For example, in Fresno County 24.8% (47,465) of the total K-12 enrollment of 191,640 students were **English language learners** (ELL) in 2009-10. Combined with those who were Fluent English Proficient, 39.8% of the total population had a primary language other than English. Statewide 23.8% (1,475,988) of K-12 students are ELL, and 42.5% of the state's students are language minority (LM). For the other target counties in this application the demographics are similar: Alameda 22% ELL, 42.7% LM, with 212,800 in total enrollment (TE); Los Angeles 26.4% ELL, 53.4% LM, 1,574,150 TE; Riverside 22% ELL, 36.9% LM, 423,412 TE; and San Bernardino 21.4% ELL, 35.3% LM, 417,533 TE (<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>).

The **nature of the problem** is both fiscal and academic with ramifications for higher education, state and national economies, and the academic and career aspirations of thousands of students. Remediation is expensive; the report, *Diploma to Nowhere*, estimates that the educational costs for remediation are between \$2.31 and \$2.89 billion nationwide (Strong American Schools, 2008). The report estimates that the cost of remediation per student is between \$2,025 and \$2,531. Using these estimates, costs were as high as \$59.7 million for the 23,602 CSU students identified as needing remediation in fall 2010. Also, many students who enroll in remedial courses do not graduate. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2003) reports that while 57% of students who do not need remediation graduate from college in eight years, only 29% of students who enroll in remedial education do so. In order for the U.S. to meet President Obama's 2020 goal of "regaining its position as the nation with the highest percentage of its population holding post-secondary degrees and credentials" and "increase by 50% the number of Americans with a postsecondary certificate, credential, or degree college graduates" (USDE 2011), students need to enter college prepared to compete equally.

The ERWC is designed to prepare students to meet the academic literacy demands of college successfully, and the results of program evaluations (see Appendix D and below) are promising. Although over 6,000 California educators have participated in professional development for the ERWC, only 278 schools (22.3% of the state's 1,246 comprehensive high schools) have adopted the ERWC as a full-year course, representing a **gap in available services**. In target counties, the percent of adopting high schools ranges widely: Alameda 21.0% (13); Fresno 26.8% (11); Los Angeles 27.4% (77); Riverside 49.1% (28); and San Bernardino 20.6% (13).

A.3. Likely Positive Impact of the Proposed Project. If funded, the project will take action on four sets of objectives (outlined on page 3 and described in Section B) designed to improve and expand the quality and scope of the curriculum and related professional development and study the curriculum's effects on student performance when implemented with high degrees of fidelity. These curriculum improvement, professional development, and classroom implementation activities will incorporate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and strategies for English language learners. In addition to preparation in academic literacy, the program will provide support for college application processes for financial aid and admission. The effect of these activities will be to expand the **availability** and **quality of services** for students with the aim of **radically reducing their need for remediation** when entering college.

Data linking the use of the ERWC with decreases in remediation, and hence the **likelihood of a positive impact**, are derived from evaluation studies that examined quantitative and qualitative outcomes for schools with large numbers of teachers participating in ERWC professional development and schools that participated in a federal Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant from 2006-2010. In those studies the rates of gain were calculated on the percent of college ready students (as measured by the Early Assessment Program (EAP))

test in 11th grade) and the percent of students proficient upon entry in the CSU (as measured by the CSU English Placement Test (EPT)) from 2006-2010. In the FIPSE evaluation, the schools participating in ERWC showed more improvement than all schools at the state level. Although neither result was determined to be statistically significant, there were gains in percent ready on the EAP (7.6 vs. 6.0) and gains or losses in percent proficient on the EPT (2.74 vs. -4.0). The limitations of this study, reporting whole school data rather than data matched for students in the course, underscore the need to conduct a study with a rigorous, quasi-experimental design.

The FIPSE evaluation report also included survey results from CSU first-year composition students. Students at several CSU campuses were surveyed regarding the type of senior English courses they took, the amount of writing they did, and their opinions regarding their level of preparedness for college-level English. According to the surveys, students who had taken Advanced Placement (AP) English (16%) or the ERWC (16%) during their senior year in high school reported that these courses required lots of essay writing, “with 69% of AP students and 63% of ERWC students reporting two to four essays a month. Students who wrote at least two essays or more a month were much more likely to report being well prepared for college than students who wrote one essay or less a month. About half of the students who reported that they were not well prepared in high school were in remedial English classes at the university. The type of English class attended in senior year was a good predictor of whether students ended up in a remedial course at the university. Only 35% of students who reported taking ERWC were placed in remedial English, compared to 50% of students from other types of courses” (Hafner, Joseph, & McCormick, December 2010, p. iii-iv). Students, regardless of course, reported that they were not prepared for the amount of reading expected in college, and many “wished they had been asked to do more writing, as well as a variety of writing and research papers in high school.”

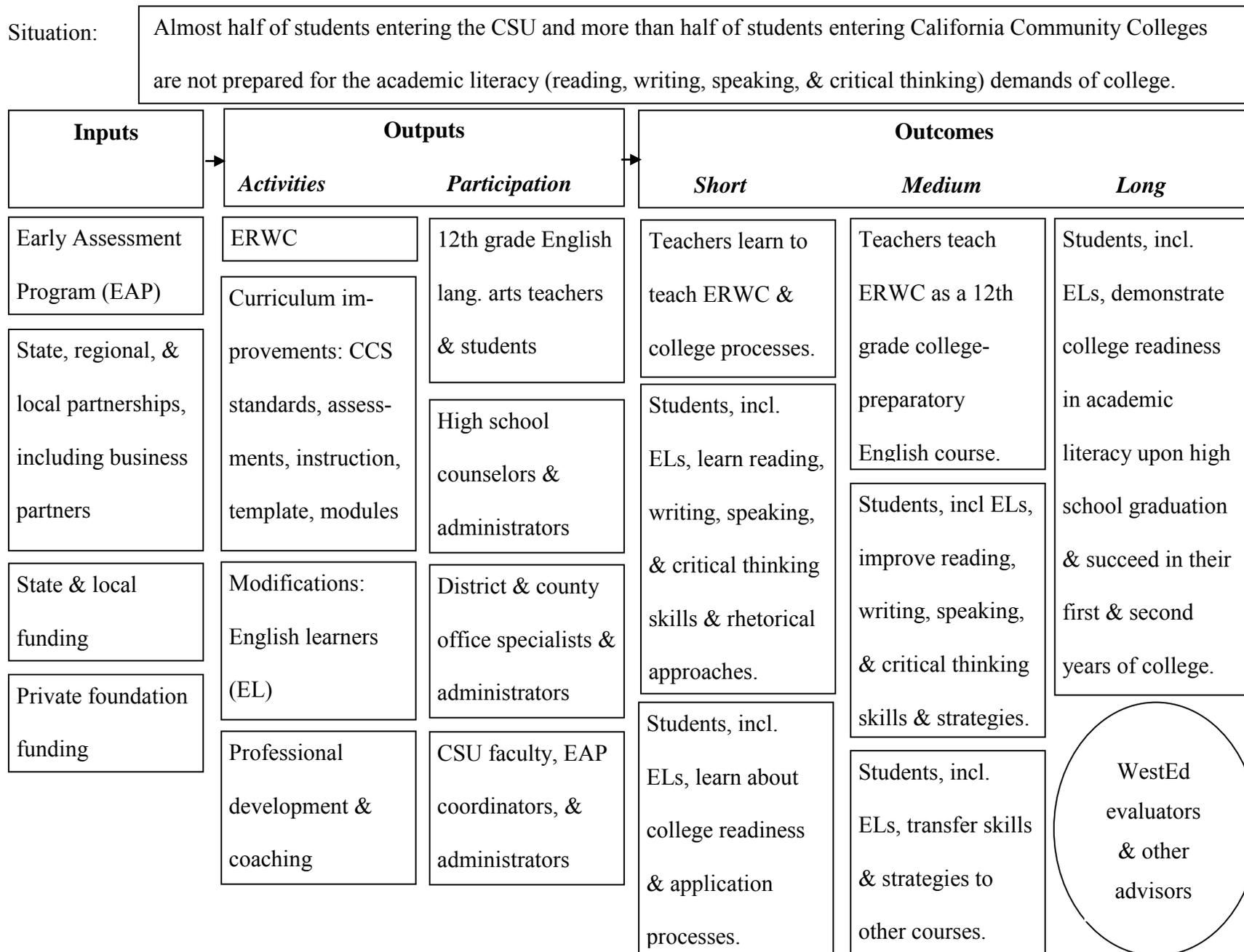
The extant data, although not derived from quasi-experimental research studies, do suggest that the **project, if funded, is likely to have a positive impact** by reducing the need for remediation in English and increasing college completion. Teachers, students, and administrators who have experienced the ERWC are enthusiastic. According to a recent evaluation report: “One teacher who has taught seniors for the past twenty years believes ERWC and its approach is a ‘*godsend.*’ ... [ERWC] helped her realize that college professors ‘*want students to come in, read something, view something, and then go to that text, visual or otherwise, and support their ideas with evidence from the text. ERWC does that.*’ She adds that her students are empowered with the skills they learn. ‘*That...is the epiphany...they have, that they really have more power than they’ve been led to believe...When they can go back to the text and give examples to support an opinion or statement. When they own that, all of a sudden you see them wanting to be more engaged*’” (Hafner 2010). Student interview comments reveal: “[*T*]his stuff ... connects to us more than what we would usually read because it has to do with stuff that we face every day. Like it’s pretty neat because kids would have totally different opinions... We argued our points pretty strongly and... we just really discussed it a lot.” (Lake County) “...now...I realize that when you read something you don’t have to agree with what they’re talking about. You can like disagree with it ... and you can write about that” (Bakersfield) (Katz 2005). An email from an English department chair illustrates the impact on a school. “*This is revolutionary stuff. This is a cultural change at the school...We have changed students’ achievement levels and their perceptions of themselves on a large and systemic basis*” (T. Borden, personal communication, April 24, 2010).

B.1. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN: Goals, Strategies, and Actions Aligned to Priorities to Achieve Results. The proposed project will build and expand on the existing state infrastructure for curriculum dissemination and professional development. The CSU con-

tracts with the County Superintendents' organization to jointly offer ERWC professional development workshops to introduce the ERWC to English teachers. Facilitated by two workshop leaders, a CSU or community college faculty member and a high school teacher or county specialist, the 20-hour workshop series is divided into 3-4 sessions conducted over a period of 3-6 months. The professional development workshop supplies all course materials, provides teachers with a theoretical understanding of the ERWC, communicates college expectations in academic literacy, outlines the student and school benefits of the course, and offers pragmatic strategies for using the materials to teach each module. During sessions teachers learn to score writing using the CSU English Placement Test scoring guide, and they problem-solve implementation challenges in their schools. The password-protected ERWC Online Community provides a forum for teachers across the state to share ideas and help each other after completing the workshop.

Three sets of **clear goals** and **outcomes** and four sets of **objectives** and **actions** guide the project's **strategies**. These grew from the logic model displayed in figure 1, which demonstrates the project's **alignment** with the **identified priorities** to implement high-quality standards, ensure college success, and meet the needs of ELL students. The logic model also provides a roadmap for implementing, tracking, and **achieving** the project's goals, objectives, and outcomes. The impetus for the activities and strategies proposed in this plan came from practicing teachers, professional development leaders, and members of the ERWC Advisory Committee (many from the original ERWC Task Force). Teachers, professional developers, and committee members met in June and July to review new modules, student work, and papers suggesting modifications for English learners, instructional strategies, formative assessment, and the Assignment Template. Each proposed project activity is the result of observed effects of the curriculum on students as reported by teachers and advisors and a commitment to continual improvement of the ERWC.

Figure 1. LOGIC MODEL: Proposed i3 Project for the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC)



Goal/Outcome 1: Approximately 3,000 12th grade students, including English language learners, in classrooms intensively implementing the ERWC will demonstrate college readiness in academic literacy upon high school graduation and subsequent success in their first and second years of college. The grant evaluators will determine readiness at the end of 12th grade using measures of reading and writing based on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies Expected of Students Entering California’s Public Colleges and Universities. Success in the first and second years of college will be determined by enrollment and persistence in college coursework. **Goal/Outcome 2:** Approximately 75 12th grade teachers in participating classrooms will demonstrate the capacity to teach ERWC successfully as indicated by an ERWC fidelity rating instrument. **Goal/Outcome 3:** Participating school districts, county offices of education, and CSU faculty will demonstrate the capacity to successfully support teachers and schools in implementing the ERWC in 12th grade by providing timely and effective professional development, coaching, and guidance as rated by teachers, counselors, and administrators through evaluation surveys and focus groups.

Objective 1: Expand, update, and refine the ERWC curriculum. **Actions: 1.1.** Fully align the course with the newly adopted Common Core State Standards; **1.2.** Publish a new document, *Modifying the ERWC Assignment Template for English Learners at the Intermediate and Early Advanced Levels*; **1.3.** Develop formative and summative assessments; **1.4.** Revise the Assignment Template to update practices; **1.5.** Publish a new document, *Teaching for Transfer and Engagement in the ERWC*, emphasizing gradual release of responsibility and best teaching practices for ERWC; and **1.6** Revise existing and add new modules.

Objective 2: Increase the scope and effectiveness of professional development. **Actions: 2.1.** Expand the use of modeling and active participation in ERWC workshops; **2.2.** Create online

professional development opportunities, including videos of teachers demonstrating ERWC strategies in classrooms; **2.3.** Differentiate professional learning opportunities for teachers who are new to the ERWC and those who are more experienced or advanced, including a graduate-level course at the CSU; **2.4.** Incorporate strategies related to English language learners and teaching for transfer and gradual release of responsibility; **2.5.** Develop opportunities for teachers in earlier grades whose students feed into the course at the 12th grade level; and **2.6.** Establish coaching and other support for teacher implementing the course in the 12th grade.

Objective 3: In order to expand the availability of the full-year course and to provide sites where the curriculum can be rigorously studied, establish up to 100 intensive implementation sites or classrooms in Fresno County and four or more counties in the state for 3,000 students.

Actions: **3.1.** Determine that sites meet criteria for fidelity of implementation, including full course adoption, teacher certification, and willingness to participate in evaluation. **3.2.** Provide additional professional development and coaching to teachers in these classrooms using district and county office of education specialists and CSU and community college faculty. **3.3.** Provide professional development and coaching related to strategies for English language learners and other advanced ERWC strategies and assessments. **3.4.** Identify and implement classroom and other advising activities to help students understand issues of college affordability and the processes for applying for financial aid and college admission using counselors, teachers, and other peer and adult advisors.

Objective 4: Study the impact of the ERWC program through a rigorous, quasi-experimental research design. **Actions:** See Section C for specific actions related to the research study and evaluation of the grant.

B.2. Cost Estimates. The **estimated cost of the project**, including **start-up, operating, and indirect costs**, is **\$232.08 per student per year to reach 3,000 students in the program and 6,000 students in the evaluation** (3,000 students not receiving the ERWC treatment). The cost per student is obtained by dividing the total of federal and private foundation grant contributions of \$3.45 million (minus evaluation costs) by 4 years and by 3,000 students (\$176.66). Annual evaluation costs are calculated by dividing the total cost of the evaluation by 4 years and by 6,000 students (\$55.42). The proposed project will include the following types of costs per student per year: development and production costs for curriculum and professional development expansion (\$40.63); costs for salaries and travel for school district and county office of education specialists and university faculty to act as advanced professional developers and coaches (\$71.46); classroom books and consumable materials (\$30 annualized to \$12.50); administrative costs (\$25.36); indirect costs (\$26.71); and evaluation costs for 6,000 students (\$55.42).

These i3 project funds would supplement existing CSU funding for initial teacher professional development for the ERWC. If other LEAs in another state were to implement the project, start-up costs for initial professional development would need to be added at \$18.48 per student. This cost per student is obtained by dividing the total CSU contribution for initial professional development (\$815,018) by the annual number of teacher participants (1,470) and then 30 students per teacher based on the conservative assumption that each teacher would teach one section of ERWC per year. Other LEAs would not incur costs for development and production of the curriculum or professional development (\$40.63), nor would they incur costs for evaluation (\$55.42). Combining all of the costs indicated above (except as noted), the cost per student per year would be \$172.01 resulting in a cost of \$17,201,000 for **100,000 students**, \$43,002,500 for **250,000 students**, and \$86,005,000 for **500,000 students**. The cost of classroom teacher salaries

is not considered in any of these calculations since all 12th grade students are enrolled in some form of an English course in order to graduate. If an LEA were to limit professional development to the initial 20 hours for teachers to learn the curriculum, costs, after start-up, would be approximately \$30 per year per student for books and consumable materials, resulting in costs of \$3M for 100,000 students, \$7.5M for 250,000 students, and \$15M for 500,000 students.

B.3. Costs Are Reasonable. The ERWC is a **low-cost alternative** to expensive literature anthologies used in many English language arts classrooms. The two-full length works, *Into the Wild* and *Left Hand of Darkness*, can be purchased for approximately \$20, and the consumable *ERWC: Student Reader*, which contains the other 39 course readings, can be purchased for approximately \$10. Student versions of the lessons are available to teachers online and can be duplicated or used electronically. Compared to \$90 to \$100 for one student textbook or literature anthology, the cost of ERWC classroom materials is very reasonable. The **cost of professional development** for the ERWC is **also modest**. Comparable teacher workshops for the highly respected Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Reading Apprenticeship programs range from \$800 to \$1,200 for registration. Computing the cost of these offerings per student based on 30 students per teacher at \$27-\$40, both exceed the \$18.48 in costs for ERWC initial professional development. The project proposed by this application adds costs, beyond the existing program, for curriculum and professional development improvements, coaching and differentiated professional learning, establishment of intensive implementation sites, and evaluation. At \$232.08 per student per year, these **costs are reasonable** when considering that the **activities will result in long-term improvements** to the curriculum and professional learning system for the ERWC. In addition, the evaluation, as designed, has the **potential** to determine the effectiveness of the program and establish it as a **model worthy of nationwide replication**.

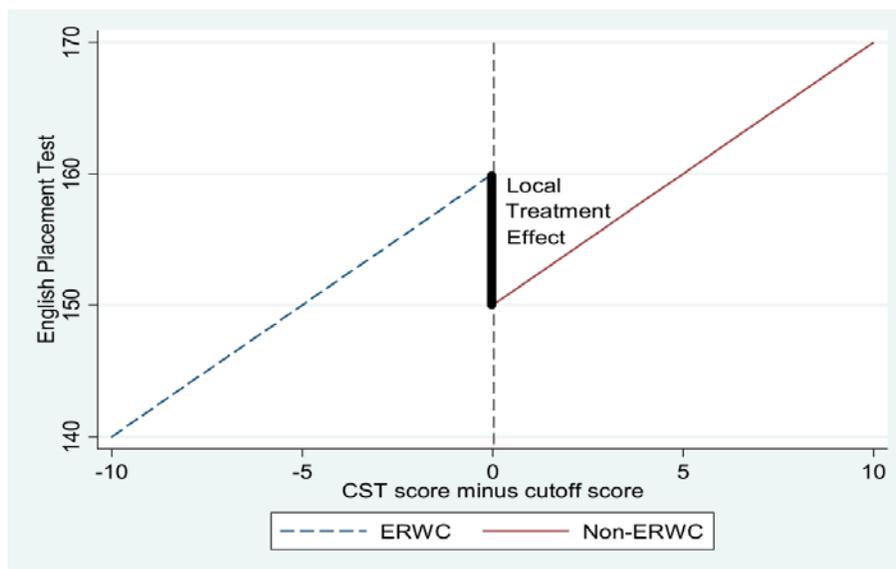
B.4. Incorporation of Project into Ongoing Work at the End of the Grant. The ongoing work of the FCOE, other partner county offices of education and school districts, and the CSU already includes the EAP and ERWC as major priorities. This proposed project has been designed to add value to the existing system of ERWC professional development and classroom instruction. Given the organizational priorities, the project has **planned** for CSU funding to continue for the initial 20-hours of professional development **after the grant ends**. The improvements to the curriculum and professional development system realized as a part of this project **will remain as long-term additions** to the quality of these resources. Advanced professional development and coaching are new elements in our project design that the organizations would need to decide how to sustain. One of the project's activities will be to develop resources that will support future, low-cost professional development options, such as online offerings, teacher videos, and local CSU graduate or continuing education courses. The project also intends to **integrate** the review of ERWC student work **into the institutional life of participating schools** so that teachers score writing, plan instruction, and identify strategies for students who need extra support as a part of the work of their local professional learning communities. As schools mobilize in the next few years to begin implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the ERWC provides a model of curriculum and instruction that will make the transition to the new standards easier for teachers and beneficial for students. The CSU has been approached by staff from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to share the ERWC nationwide as an exemplar of curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The university is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with PARCC for that purpose. Regardless of future outside funding support, California is committed to maintaining the ERWC for its own students into the foreseeable future.

C: QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION. A rigorous, quasi-experimental design, applying regression-discontinuity analysis, is utilized to assess the impact of the ERWC on subsequent student performance linked to college readiness. By California state mandate, students take the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the California Standards Test (CST) in the spring of their sophomore (10th grade) year. Students in participating schools who receive a score of 392 or higher (*advanced*) on the 10th grade ELA CST will not participate in the ERWC course; students in those schools who score below 392 (*basic* or *proficient*) will enroll in ERWC in 12th grade. Since this clearly defined cut-score deterministically places students into the ERWC, this situation is well suited for the regression-discontinuity design.

The regression-discontinuity (RD) design is employed because it allows for a strong inference to be made about program impacts, if they exist. In this RD design, the probability of participating in the ERWC goes from exactly one to zero as students' scores cross from *proficient* (or below) to *advanced* on the CST. Provided that other determinants of student outcomes are not themselves discontinuous at the cut-score, variation in ERWC status generated at the cut-score can be used to identify the causal effect of participation in ERWC (Hahn, Todd, & van der Klaauw, 2001). Specifically, students scoring just above the cut-point can be compared with students scoring just below the cut-point on outcomes of interest since the potential outcomes and the treatment status are conditional on the CST score. A graphical example of the regression-discontinuity design is provided below in figure 2. In this figure, the CST score (centered at the cut-off score) is plotted on the *x*-axis and the English Placement Test (EPT) is plotted on the *y*-axis. Students scoring below the CST cutoff of *advanced* (scale score = 392) are placed into ERWC (indicated by a dashed line), while students scoring above the cutoff do not enroll in ERWC (indicated by a solid line). A hypothetical treatment effect is shown graphically (using a thick black

line) as the vertical distance between the dashed and solid lines near the CST cutoff point (that is, where CST score minus the cutoff score is zero on the x -axis).

Figure 2. Impact of ERWC on English Placement Test



The sample will consist of approximately 6,000 10th grade students across 10 districts in California, thus providing a wide range of students and school environments. Project evaluators estimate two schools in each district, with approximately 300 12th grade students per school participating. Data collected on these students will include gender, ethnicity, English language learner status, and free- or reduced-price lunch status.³ See Appendix J for a thorough discussion of the technical details of the regression-discontinuity analysis, including power estimation.

Outcomes Measures. To examine the impact of the ERWC, a number of different student outcome measures will be studied. The primary outcome will be the student's score on the EPT, which is administered at the end of 12th grade. This test is a capstone event for the ERWC course and determines whether students will be placed in a credit-bearing English course or in a remedial composition course, upon enrollment at the CSU (CSU, 2009). All students in the study

³ Demographic characteristics will be included in the analysis for variance reduction purposes.

will take this test at the end of their high school senior year. Scoring will be conducted double-blind by experienced readers following a systematic calibration process. The approach will include a 100% double-read protocol, with 15% of items assessed by a third “read-behind” reviewer to assure ongoing reliability and calibration. Other outcome variables that will be tested are the ERWC final writing prompt (which is taken from a released EPT exam), higher education matriculation status and institution, the student’s grade in their first college-level English course, and persistence and GPA from freshman to sophomore year in college. Using these measures as student outcomes over time, the impacts of taking the ERWC course will be estimated.

C.1. Implementation Data, Performance Feedback, and Periodic Assessment of Progress toward Achieving the Intended Outcomes. In addition to the measurement of **program outcomes specified above**, the evaluation plan includes a series of **periodic**, formative evaluative steps and fidelity measures that will contextualize the findings as well as provide **feedback to program staff regarding performance**. Because implementation of the ERWC requires both school-level and teacher-level commitments, survey protocols that capture **implementation data** from both of these perspectives will be used in the evaluation. At the school level, the district, county, or CSU faculty ERWC coaches will be responsible for connecting the evaluation staff to site principals and English department chairs to complete a survey at the initial fall and final spring implementation periods. The survey will explore the perceived need for the program, the extent to which teacher support might be/has been positive for the program, and the connection between the ERWC and other components of pre-collegiate supports for students.

Implementation Measures. Fidelity measures of implementation will be conducted at three points during the academic year. Because the 14 ERWC modules are designed with some pacing parameters and specific requirements, the evaluation team will administer a low-inference

“check-list” instrument to capture the extent to which the modules, in all of their components, are being completed. For example, 12 of the modules require a full assessment of writing that can be conducted at the conclusion of module instruction throughout the year. Program designers see this as a key indicator of how the teacher has implemented the program and provided feedback to students on developmental gains. Information gathered in the surveys will cycle back to the coaches and professional learning communities in each school to enable school-level groups to troubleshoot instances of limited fidelity. The evaluation team will also place classroom observers in select schools to document the implementation of ERWC in the field setting. The observers will use an observational tool that combines open-ended and closed-response items to capture the quality of classroom discourse, student engagement, and the depth by which students are engaged in the curricular content. Observers will also be looking for the connection between ERWC and themes that support college preparation: motivation, specific steps toward college preparation, and the weaving of ERWC discourse with college-level academic expectations.

C.2. Evaluation Information to Facilitate Further Development. The evaluation team will design a set of protocols for use by the ERWC coaches that will allow for a collection of systematic responses from teachers as they participate in the professional learning communities. Teachers will be well suited to provide feedback to the program team (through the ERWC coaches) about the way in which the curriculum reaches students at varying levels of proficiency. Student views as well, collected through focus groups, will be conducted to help explain how, and in what ways, the curriculum has been implemented and learned through the year. At the heart of the investigation is how students respond to the ERWC course and whether the depth and strength of the intervention is sufficient to reach additional students with increasingly greater needs for reading and writing proficiency.

The quantitative and qualitative data that are collected are expected to provide **substantial information** about how the program could be adjusted or improved in **further stages of development**. Using these data to modify program strategies, future **replications** testing a two-year ERWC curricular sequence and the pairing of the ERWC with other systematic supports for students with particular needs can be imagined. The evaluation team also expects to learn how additional professional development might be provided to teachers to enable further scaling of the approach to schools where the program has not been implemented. Taken together, the evaluation program is designed to allow for information on program development and replication to **test efficacy in alternative program configurations** in the future.

C.3. Sufficient Resources to Evaluate the Project Effectively. The evaluation plan has been **staffed and budgeted at a level sufficient to carry out the design** that has been described. The budget for evaluation constitutes approximately 25% of the total proposed costs. The evaluation team, housed at WestEd, will be led by researchers with experience in conducting high school experimental and quasi-experimental studies (see Appendix F). The budget has been carefully reviewed to allow for quantitative data collection, data panel matching with the higher education segments, and a series of implementation and fidelity measures. The project team sees the evaluation as central to the ongoing replication and development of the ERWC intervention.

D.1. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN: Adequacy of the Plan to Achieve Objectives on Time and Within Budget. The management plan for the proposed project is reflected in the Logic Model (see Section B) and detailed in the Project Work Plan (see Appendix J). The Logic Model indicates the groups who will be project beneficiaries, participants, implementers, developers, leaders, advisors, administrators, and evaluators. The Work Plan specifies the **tasks, responsibilities, timelines, and milestones** for each of the **project's goals, objectives,**

and **actions** identified in Section B.1 for the four years of the grant. The Work Plan will be used by the project's co-directors and evaluators to monitor the progress of the goals and objectives to ensure that **project objectives are accomplished on time and within budget**. A senior-level FCOE leadership team will manage the project in close cooperation with leaders from the CSU Chancellor's Office, including the Center for the Advancement of Reading, and the outside evaluation team led by WestEd researchers. Advisors for the evaluation will include researchers from the CSU, the UC, the Educational Results Partnership, and the Educational Testing Service. Supported by the project's directors, CSU EAP coordinators and coaches who are school district and county office of education specialists and CSU and community college faculty will provide direct support to implementing teachers and schools. Grant activities will build on the existing statewide infrastructure for ERWC professional development established in 2004 and funded since by the CSU. It is led and supported by the Stanislaus County Office of Education under the auspices of the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. These long-standing commitments indicate the **sustainability** of this project. Because the ERWC, once adopted, becomes the base curriculum for high school English language arts classrooms, the project is easily **scaled** to other schools and districts. The California Business for Education Excellence Foundation, co-sponsor of the Educational Results Partnership, is confirmed as a private, non-profit partner that will advise the project and help with fundraising efforts. Other private partners will be solicited should the application be successful.

D.2. Qualifications, Training, and Experience of Project Director and Key Personnel.

Key personnel for each of the project's partners follow with relevant training and experience noted for each. See Appendix F for resumes with more complete information.

Fresno County Office of Education: Dr. Kathryn Catania is the Administrator of the Academic System-wide Intensive Support Team for the FCOE. She has developed and directed many large grants, including the Title III English Learner Instructional Training and Technical Assistance for County Court and Juvenile Justice Schools, \$1.1 million, Teaching American History (TAH), \$3.2 million; CA Math Science Project, \$3.1 million; and 21st Century/ASES \$21 million. Her **doctoral training** and **experience** as an **administrator** and **grant director** make her well-qualified to oversee this project. **Dr. Lisa Benham** is the English-Language Arts, History-Social Science Coordinator for the FCOE. She manages the TAH grant overseeing budget, institutes, and field studies. She is also a professional development provider for English Language Arts instructional materials and Cognitive Coaching, and has been an Assistant Superintendent of a local school district. Her **doctoral training** and **experience** as an **administrator** and **grant manager** make her well-qualified to co-direct this project **Ms. Shirley Hargis** is the FCOE, Literacy Consultant. She is the ERWC Region 7 County Lead and an ERWC professional development leader. As a team member for the Title III grant, she serves as the liaison for eight counties. She is a professional developer for Title III and several other English language arts projects as well. Her **training** as a high school teacher and reading specialist and **experience** as a **project lead** make her well-qualified to help coordinate this project.

California State University: Ms. Nancy Brynelson is the Co-Director of the Center for the Advancement of Reading and was director of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) Comprehensive Program grant, *CSU Alignment of High School and College Curriculum*, from 2006-2010. She directs the CSU Reading Institutes for Academic Preparation and coordinates professional development for the ERWC statewide. She has managed Title I, Title II, Title VII, and other grants as a school district Special Projects Director and

school principal; she has overseen grants as a consultant for the California Department of Education as well. Her **training** as a teacher, administrator, and bilingual education specialist and **experience** as a **grant director** make her well-qualified to co-direct this project. **Dr. Zulmara Cline** is an Associate Director at the Office of the Chancellor at California State University. She was the co-director of the FIPSE grant, *CSU Alignment of High School and College Curriculum*. She helps coordinate the EAP, ERWC, and other college readiness initiatives within the CSU. A former CSU professor, her **doctoral training** and **experience** as a **program coordinator** make her well-qualified to help coordinate this project. **CSU Faculty Leaders: Dr. John R. Edlund** is a Professor in the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Cal Poly Pomona and former Director of the University Writing Center. He chaired the CSU Task Force that created the ERWC and continues to **chair** the current **ERWC Advisory Committee**. He authored two ERWC modules and frequently conducts professional development for teachers. He also served as president of the Executive Committee of the CSU English Council. **Dr. Adele Arellano** is a Professor of Bilingual/Multicultural Education at CSU Sacramento. She is Co-Leader of the CSU Sacramento Reading Institute for Academic Preparation, a professional development institute in academic literacy for high school teachers and university faculty. She is also a professional developer for the Comprehensive Teacher Education Initiative for the San Juan Unified School District in Sacramento. **Ms. Roberta Ching** is a Professor and Department Chair in the Learning Skills Center at CSU Sacramento. An original member of the ERWC Task Force, she authored four of the modules in the ERWC, *A Text-Based Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing*, and a new document to help teachers modify the ERWC for English language learners. A specialist in TESOL, she regularly conducts professional development and coaches middle and high school teachers. **Dr. Richard Hansen** is an Associate Professor of English and Director of Composi-

tion at CSU Fresno, where he also serves as the Early Assessment Program Director for Academic Preparation in English. He is a professional development provider for the ERWC for the Central Valley region and consults frequently with local school districts. **Dr. Norman Unrau** is a Professor Emeritus in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction at CSU Los Angeles. He coordinates the Master of Arts in Education with an option in Middle and Secondary Curriculum and Instruction. He is a member of the ERWC Advisory Committee and the author of numerous publications related to adolescent literacy, reading research, and motivation.

California Business for Education Excellence: Dr. James Lanich is the Director of Policy and Research of the California Business for Education Excellence and President and Founder of the Educational Results Partnership. The Partnership is a non-profit organization that provides school and district achievement data and information related to the practices of high performing schools that raise student achievement. He has successfully procured funding from the private and philanthropic sectors for various educational reform initiatives, including those involving high-quality implementation of content area standards.

WestEd: Dr. Neal Finkelstein is a Senior Research Scientist at WestEd who designs and implements rigorous field-based program evaluations and impact studies. Part of his work includes the design and implementation of large-scale randomized controlled trials in education settings under the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West). His **doctoral training and experience** as a **researcher** and **evaluator** make him well-qualified to lead the evaluation of this project. **Dr. Anthony Fong** is a Senior Policy Associate who performs quantitative analyses within WestEd's Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West). His **doctoral training and experience** performing a wide variety of econometric analyses, including time series analysis, survival analysis, and multilevel modeling, make him well-qualified to evaluate this project.