



California Writing Project

ISAW

Improving Students' Academic Writing

ISAW: A Learning Community; Not a One-Time Event

ISAW is not a system; it is a lens through which teams of teachers sharpen their focus on improving the teaching and learning of academic writing and critical reading.

ISAW Year One—Understanding and Assessing Academic Writing

- What is the nature and purpose of academic writing?
- How can I demystify analytical writing for my students?
- How do I strengthen students' critical reading skills?
- How can I help my students write analytical essays that are clear, compelling, contestable, and complex?
- What effective strategies can I use to help students to explore the relationship between their ideas and the writer's while demonstrating insight into the implications of the texts they read?
- How can the ISAW improvement continuum help me assess and guide my students' understanding of academic writing, inform my teaching practice, and develop next steps in my instruction?

ISAW Year Two—Scaffolding, Differentiating, and Refining Instruction and Assessment

- How do I use ISAW resources and strategies to scaffold, adjust, and reframe my instructional strategies and lessons?
- How do I refine my ability to teach for improvement?
- How do I develop individual writing and reading support for each student?
- How do I help each student develop a writing improvement plan?
- How do I use ISAW to enhance the writing program in my classroom and at my school?
- How does our school team use ISAW to strengthen our Professional Learning Community (PLC)?
- How can our PLC use the ISAW assessments to learn systematically from student work?
- How can our PLC enlarge our discussion to include teachers of diverse students and across disciplines?

ISAW Year Three and Beyond—Accelerating Every Student's Academic Preparation for Success Beyond High School

- How do I work with my colleagues to make academic writing an integral component of a high school curriculum by focusing on student improvement?
- How do I share ISAW information about students' achievement and progress as they transition to the next grade level?
- How do I collaborate with my school, district, and ISAW colleagues to accelerate the academic writing improvement of all students—the college-bound, English learners, and struggling writers—and prepare more of these students for college-going?
- How can ISAW enhance other school programs and partnerships— AVID, UC Early Academic Outreach Program, Puente, CSU ERWC and RIAP, CAL-PASS, IB, and AP?
- How do I collaborate with other high school, community college, and four-year university teachers to move students along a pathway of academic preparation that leads to success in and beyond high school?
- How do I develop my skills as an ISAW, school, and writing project leader?