

The Distance Between Us

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MODULE: TEACHER VERSION

Grade 11, 5 weeks

ERWC with Integrated and Designated ELD

Module Purpose

Immigration has been and continues to be a subject that invites not only controversy, but a myriad of stories, experiences, and viewpoints. Reyna Grande’s memoir *The Distance Between Us* provides students with an astonishingly honest depiction of the struggles of an immigrant—before, during, and after. Her story appeals to a variety of readers, as it is not only a tale of transition in geography, but in age, family dynamics, and identity. During the module, they practice and refine their abilities as readers and writers as they evaluate Grande as a writer and the rhetorical strategies she uses to keep readers engaged while she unfolds her life story. After reading and analyzing the memoir, students write argumentatively about the turning point in Grande’s life and revise with Grande as their potential audience.

Questions at Issue

- What are the effects of immigration on a family? How does the experience change the family before, during, and after the actual immigration has taken place?
- What drives immigration and how does family separation affect children?
- How do writers of memoirs manage the maintenance of a narrative while staying true to their actual stories?
- How can family dynamics influence an individual’s coming of age?

Module Text

Grande, Reyna. *The Distance Between Us: A Memoir*. Washington Square Press, 2012.

Module Web Site

Grande, Reyna. *Reyna Grande: Award Winning Author and Inspirational Speaker*, 2020, reynagrande.com. Accessed 6 Jan. 2020.

Module Learning Goals: Integrated

At the end of the module, students will be able to

- Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a narrative
- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, and events interact and develop over the course of the text
- Determine an author’s point of view and purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power and persuasiveness of the text
- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of a text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

Module Learning Goals: Designated

In addition to meeting the ELA objectives for this module, Expanding and Bridging students will be able to

- Exchange information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics
- Interact with others in written English in various communicative forms
- Offer and justify opinions, negotiating with and persuading others in communicative exchanges
- Read closely literary nonfiction to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language
- Justify own arguments and evaluate others’ arguments in writing

Rhetorical Concepts

The rhetorical concepts emphasized in this module include pathos, ethos, rhetorical purpose, epideictic rhetoric, and genre.

English Language Arts Standards

Emphasized in this module are the following English language arts (ELA) standards for grades 11-12: Reading Informational Text 1-3, 6; Writing 1, 5; Speaking and Listening 1.

English Language Development Standards

Emphasized in this module are the following English language development (ELD) standards for grades 11-12: Part I, A. Collaborative, 1-3, Bridging; Part I, B. Interpretive, 6, Bridging; Part I, C. Productive, 9-11, Bridging; Part II, A. Structuring Cohesive Texts, 1-2.

Defining Features of the Module

The module offers students the opportunity to read a full-length memoir about the experience of a young woman who lives in poverty in Mexico before rejoining her parents in Los Angeles. It offers opportunities to identify with her experiences as an immigrant and as a young person growing up while analyzing how she crafts those experiences into a compelling narrative. Students analyze the arguments she implicitly makes through her story, consider her reliability as a narrator by exploring alternate perspectives, and explore the rhetorical strategies she uses to engage her readers. They participate in collaborative discussion throughout the module to defend their opinions, receive feedback, and consider different points of view. In preparation for their final argumentative writing assignment, they chart central ideas, identify a “golden line,” and summarize and respond to each chapter to ultimately create a graph tracing the development of the main character, Reyna Grande.

The following activities provide opportunities for students to practice writing brief constructed responses similar to those found on the eleventh grade California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) or Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment. If you choose to use some of them in this way, they can be scored using Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Brief Write Rubric (Appendix B). Alternatively, you can use them as low-stakes writing-to-learn quickwrites.

- Activity 11: Annotating and Questioning the Text – Cause and Effects
- Activity 10D: Annotating and Questioning the Text – Golden Line Constructed Response
- Activity 19: Annotating and Questioning the Text – Plot and Narrative Devices
- Activity 14D: Examining the Structure of the Text – Events and Their Consequences
- Activity 16D: Thinking Critically – Rhetorical Purpose Response

Culminating Task

The argumentative essay assignment asks students to construct an argument about which event in Grande’s life serves as the turning point in her coming of age. Students support their choice and explain why, in the scope of the whole story, the event had the most impact on Grande as she developed into a woman, using evidence from the text. They then revise their essays rhetorically with Grande as their potential audience.

Module Background

The module is designed to guide students as they evaluate Reyna Grande’s memoir *The Distance Between Us* and analyze her development as a character. This text is divided into two sections: Book One, “Mi Mamá Me Ama,” which is set entirely in Mexico and recounts Grande’s childhood experiences, and Book Two, “The Man Behind the Glass,” which takes place in California and describes Grande’s transition, not only from a child to a woman, but from a Mexican to a Mexican-American. Students complete several long-term tasks which, when combined, help them analyze the arc of Grande’s rite of passage. They also examine their own memories and evaluate their place in their own stories.

This module explores immigration through the experiences of one immigrant. It can be paired with the eleventh grade module “Changing Minds: Thinking about Immigration” to enable students to consider the issue from additional points of view as well as analyze how people come to change beliefs about controversial topics. Before teaching the module, the mini-module “Introducing Ethos, Pathos, and Logos” can lay a foundation for analyzing some of the rhetorical strategies Reyna Grande uses in her memoir.

This module assumes that students will do most of the reading outside of class in preparation for the discussion and writing activities that go on in class. Listening to you read passages aloud will help students engage with the text and having students read independently in class while you conference with small groups about their reading strategies and how to negotiate meaning when they encounter difficult portions of the text will be essential. However, students also need to build their independent and reading stamina to be college and career-ready by the time they graduate from high school. Because of its high level of interest, *The Distance Between Us* provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop academic habits of mind.

Module Background: English Language Development

Resources in this module enable teachers of English learner students at the Expanding and Bridging levels of English proficiency and other linguistically diverse learners to support their engagement with complex full-length texts with activities that amplify or differentiate support for students. Additional activities build necessary background information, offer support in skills needed in the ELA class, provide additional opportunities for discussion, and give students strategies to complete the independent and group reading of the core text.

How to use designated ELD activities:

- They can be used for all students within the ELA class, as appropriate
- They can be used to differentiate instruction for designated students within the class by replacing or supplementing an ELA activity
- They can be used during a time set aside for designated instruction for students grouped by proficiency level

Assessment of the needs of individual students, using an initial diagnostic process and regularly evaluating on-going formative assessments, can help determine how best to make use of these activities.

Setting Teaching Goals for this Module

In this module, students read a full-length memoir. As you consider the activities you will teach within the module, assess your students’ experience with this genre and adjust activities accordingly.

This module is paced for a brisk five weeks and homework will be essential. Evaluate how you can structure the five weeks to best support your students, keeping in mind their motivation levels and your formative assessment of their ability to read independently. How will you ensure that students are keeping up and able to participate fully in the in-class activities and discussions? How will you support them in developing reading stamina? Many of the protocols in the module recur multiple times. How will you provide modeling and feedback in the beginning and gradually release responsibility as students become more proficient?

Having looked at the ELA and designated objectives for the module as well as the final writing assignment, which of your teaching practices would you most like to focus on as you teach this module in order to make it the best learning experience possible for your students?

Formative Assessment Statement

Formative assessment is built into all learning activities in this module so it can occur daily. Formative assessment, or assessment for learning, is a process and not a test, tool, or event (which is an assessment of learning). It is “in-the-moment” and happens while instruction is happening, where both teachers and students engage in a feedback process. This two-way feedback is: 1) teachers (or another student) to students, who use the feedback to adjust their thinking and/or actions and 2) student to teacher (or another student), who use the information to adjust their next supportive moves. Formative assessment includes the following components:

- **A collaborative classroom culture** where students and teachers (and students with other students) are partners in learning
- **Clear lesson and learning goals along with success criteria**, so students (and their teachers) understand what students are aiming for
- **Careful observation of student learning during lessons** to determine where students are relative to goals
- **Feedback** that supports student learning by helping them understand where they are going, where they are currently, and what their next steps will be
- **Peer and self-evaluation** to strengthen students’ sense of self-efficacy, support their autonomy, and promote their collaborative learning

(Adapted from the *California English Language Arts/English Language Development (CA ELA/ELD) Framework* 823).

NOTE: ERWC Modules with Integrated and Designated ELD: Modules with integrated ELD instruction support the acquisition of academic English for all students including English learners (ELs). The designated ELD curriculum additionally provides a full college-preparatory course for English learners at the Expanding and Bridging levels. In order to make collaboration between the teachers of the ERWC and companion ELD classes as seamless as possible, the Module Plan lays out two parallel curriculums following a day-by-day sequence. Intended for 50 minute periods, it shows the activities designed for both settings and the accompanying ELA and ELD standards. The Module Plan can serve as the basis for adapting the module for the variety of settings in which instruction is delivered.

Each module is organized by days. In the Teacher Version, each day begins with the activities intended for the ERWC class and specifies the activity name, following the ERWC template, the purpose and suggested time for each activity along with a suggested procedure for teachers to consult as they plan how to implement the activity. Shaded boxes indicate student activities (possible handouts) with sample student responses in *italics*. In most cases, the italicized responses are not meant to be definitive correct answers; rather they are an example of an acceptable level of understanding. In addition, many activities exist only in the Teacher Version since no separate handout is required. The corresponding day for the designated class follows immediately and is set apart in a box with double borders. It follows the same pattern of activity name, suggested time, purpose, and procedure with a shaded box for student activities. In the event the module is being used where ELs do not have access to a designated class, the ELA teacher is encouraged to pull in activities from the designated portion of the module to support the academic language development of English learners and other students in the ERWC class.