



Instructionally Related Activities Report Form

SPONSOR: KATHLEEN CONTRERAS
DEPARTMENT: SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
ACTIVITY TITLE: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM DOOR
DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY: OCT. 8, 2015

Please submit via email to the IRA Coordinator along with any supporting documentation at david.daniels@csuci.edu within 30 days after the activity. Thank you for your commitment to engaging our students!

A. ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- (1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;
 - (2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?
 - (3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?
 - (4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?
 - (5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?
 - (6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?
 - (7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)
 - 8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.
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B. ATTENDEE LIST- SUPPORTING DOCUMENT:

In addition to the report form, *in a separate document*, attach to your email a list of attendees complete with each student major and grade level. This for IRA Committee reference only and will not be published on the IRA website. Include your name and the title of your IRA activity on the document.

C. IMAGES FROM ACTIVITY:

Finally, attach to your email up to 6 images demonstrating student participation (under 2 MB total) with captions/titles. Please attach these photos in .JPEG format directly to email. Thank you!

(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR, REYNA GRANDE, SHARED HER WRITINGS, REFLECTIONS, AND EXCERPTS FROM HER BOOKS DEALING WITH THE CONTEMPORARY ISSUES OF MEXICAN IMMIGRATION AND HOW THEY IMPACTED HER LIFE, AND THE LIVES OF CURRENT MEXICAN IMMIGRANT STUDENTS. SHE ALSO SHARED TWO COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS —THE MIGRANT PROJECT AND THE CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE WHERE SHE AND DONORS ASSIST CHILDREN IN CENTRAL MEXICO.

(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

REYNA'S BOOKS FOCUS ON THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES FILTERED DOWN TO LOCAL MEXICAN FAMILIES' SEPARATION, AND SURVIVAL IN TODAY'S SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT, WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON CHICANO/LATINO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN OUR STATE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES. MY COURSE, THE CHICANO CHILD AND ADOLESCENT, FOCUSES ON CURRENT ISSUES IN THE LIVES OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN. OUR STUDENTS WROTE REFLECTIVE PIECES BASED ON HER LECTURE AND RELATED BOOKS AS THEY COMPLEMENT OUR CLASS' THEMATIC FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION.

(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?

STUDENTS IN BOTH MY COURSE EDUC/CHS 445 AND IN THE ENGLISH MULTICULTURAL AND CHICANO LITERATURE COURSES READ THE AUTHOR'S BOOKS WHICH HELPED THEM CREATE CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHOR.

(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?

A LARGER SPACE, THAN THE LIBRARY 1320 EXHIBITION AREA, THOUGH 80+ PEOPLE FIT COMFORTABLY.

(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?

INVITE A BROADER BASE OF CONSTITUENTS, INCLUDING COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?

STUDENTS SHOWED HONOR AND RESPECT TO AN AUTHOR WHOSE PERSONAL LIFE MIRRORED THEIR OWN CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND. THEY ASKED IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND LINED UP TO MEET AND GREET HER AS A CELEBRITY AUTHOR! ENJOYED THE "TRANSPARENCY" OF THE AUTHOR TO SHARE PERSONAL HARDSHIP, STRUGGLE, SURVIVAL, AND ULTIMATELY ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.



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(7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS

STUDENTS WROTE SHORT REFLECTION PIECES AND COMMENTED POSITIVELY IN CLASS.

8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.

\$1500: AUTHOR

\$100: BOOK PURCHASE

\$1600: TOTAL

B. ON SEPARATE DOCUMENT, PLEASE ATTACH ATTENDEE LIST (PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFO REMOVED)

C. PLEASE INCLUDE UP TO 6 IMAGES AS ATTACHMENTS TO YOUR EMAIL SUBMISSION



**La
Distancia
Entre
Nosotros**

REYNA GRANDE

REYNA GRANDE

THURS. OCT. 8
BROOME LIBRARY 1320
4:30-6:00 P.M.
IRA-sponsored event
kathleen.contreras@csuci.edu

REYNA GRANDE
Author of
across a hundred mountains

**across
a hundred
mountains**

**DANCING WITH
BUTTERFLIES**



October 4, 2015

The Distance Between Us – Part 2

Her Journey:

I personally believe that Reyna following her father and mother's journey with all its challenges, heartbreak, and suffering were well worth it. Regardless her parents had already began their journey to El Otro Lado, if she wouldn't have followed their steps perhaps she would have still been under her Abuelita Chinta's care, nevertheless, perhaps under her Abuelita Evila's care which would have been dreadful and torture. Without her following her parent's journey, although there were many obstacles, she may have not gotten to experience everything she has. For example, she may not have gotten as far in her education as she was able to in the United States or she may have never been able to become a Mexican award-winning author. Perhaps if her mother and father wouldn't have begun their journey to El Otro Lado, Reyna's decision to begin her journey to El Otro Lado would have been different. She may have wanted to stay in Iguala, Mexico with her family and would have created her future there. However, by her beginning and taking the journey to El Otro Lado, despite her struggles, she has become very successful here in the United States. The American Dream became a reality for her.

Education:

Education played a major role in Reyna's life beginning with her father insisting that she continues and must try her best when it comes to her education in the United States, which leads to getting mentored and then continuing with a higher education at the University of Irvine. If I was Reyna's teacher in the United States, being bilingual myself and having to take speech classes due to a lisp I have and attending English reading classes, I would try my very best to not make them feel different than any other student. Just because they only spoke Spanish did not mean that they were different than any other individual. I would continue having them get assistance/mentoring through the English reading classes or translator. I would also meet with them before or after class or during breaks to mentor them and assist them with any questions/concerns and help them learn the English language as much as possible. Schooling plays a large part of what the mainstream culture is here in the United States.

To a certain extent, children are taught to respect one another and their elders. Which is something that is needed out in the world. One is also taught a lot of information about many different subjects, which creates an individual to be more knowledgeable when it comes to speaking or writing about a subject. One being knowledgeable could help one succeed in the future in many different perspectives. While attending school in the United States, Reyna and her siblings learned many different aspects of the American culture. Such as one is treated equally and has an equal opportunity as others, regardless of their primary language or which hand they write with. They also learned that there are many resources available to help them succeed, nevertheless, many individuals that are willing to help each other out.

I cannot remember having a mentor during my childhood besides my parents and family who are a great support, however, my older brother was very helpful, when I was younger, when it came to my math homework. He would help me almost every night with it especially since he



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knew that I was so scared to fail and not pass. Although, there were moments that he didn't want to help me or get frustrated he would always end up helping me. However, as I am pursuing a higher education, my work supervisor has mentored me a lot about my future, especially when it has come to my education and career. With his assistance, I have begun my journey towards my career as a supervisor and also assisted me in choosing a master's degree/program to do for graduate school that would pertain towards my career goals.

I am not sure which career/degree path I would be on if it was not for his time in mentoring me. I believe her father was very adamant about education because he wanted his children to have a better life and future than himself and their mother. Reyna's parents came to the United States beginning at the very bottom and he didn't want for his children to begin at the same level as they did. My parents were both very adamant about my siblings and I pursuing a higher education. **Both my parents came to the United States from Mexico. They wanted us to be able to achieve more than they did. They wanted us to get far in life and be someone important one day. Of all my siblings, although they have great jobs, I am the only one that continued my education at a university. This is my last year at CSU Channel Islands and I will then be continuing my education to receive my Masters degree and then possibly a doctorates. I hope to be able to achieve all my education goals/dreams.**

The Distance Between Us

Part 2

2. Returning Home (Chapt. 19, p. 274)

How do Reyna and her sister Mago feel about returning to Mexico? How had it changed? Describe your experience of returning to your birthplace or where you grew up? How had it changed? Do you agree with the statement: *"You can't go home"*

After many after leaving Mexico Reyna and Mago return with their mother on a week long trip, Mago was taking the opportunity to go to Acapulco with her friends and taking Reyna with her. They both had a different reaction to their trip. Reyna's emotions were a little mixed about being in her hometown. A part of her was sad because the train station was not there anymore and it was that much difficult for men to find work. The water stream they once took showers in was polluted. Different things she saw brought her a different memory. While in Mexico Reyna took the opportunity to go look for the girl who was once her best friend she was 17 years old and had kids. It was awkward for them to see each other they had nothing to talk about their lives were completely different. In a way Reyna thought that could have been her life if she had never gone to "El Otro Lado" Mago didn't care about her home town she thought she was better than everyone else she was mad because her shoes had gotten dirty and everything about her grandmothers house bothered her. She didn't even bother to look for her old friends.

I was born and raised in Oxnard California in the same house all my life. Until about four years when I moved in with my boyfriend only about half a mile from the house I grew up in, so the change has not been different. But I remember visiting my family in Mexico compared to the first time I visited to the last time I when the small town of Ario de Rayon Michoacan has been through some changes. People are starting to fix of their houses the roads are not made up of rocks and dirt but people are investing money to make them out of cement. The people from each street have to put in money if they want their road to be fixed up by the government. If the people form that particular doesn't want their road to be fixed then it stays how it is. The churches in the town have also been renovated. They have even built a soccer team for the kids in the community to have something to do instead of getting into trouble in the streets. The opposite from Reyna's town has happen to my parent's hometown. The people from the community are investing into making it a better community. I haven't visited in about 4 years I am looking forward to one day soon to be able to take my son and have him see were his grandparents grew up.

Yes I agree with the statement "You can't go home" because home is never the same as when you lived there. Things change, people change and "you" change. The home you once knew is not really there.

3. Her Journey

Do you think her journey to *El Otro Lado*, following her father and mother and all its challenges, heartbreak, and suffering was worth it?

I think this is an extremely difficult question to say yes or no to. The father was abusive even before going to *El Otro Lado* so I think he would have been abusive even if he stayed in Mexico. He would of probably had found another woman to cheat on Reyna's mother because he cheated on Mila as well. But on the other had it seemed like Reyna's mother really changed the fact that her husband cheated on her after so many years of being apart. Something inside Reyna's mother changed. She was bitter she had lost apart of who she was after having to leave her kids once. She didn't belong in the United States because of her legal status but she didn't fit in Mexico anymore because she had experience a different life in the United States. She would have had a rough time making it alone if her husband stopped sending her money. After being in the United States and making dollars she couldn't make it work raising four, kids as a single mother making little to no money. **She had to make a decision stay in Mexico with her kids and have no money to feed them or leave to the United States and send them money for them to eat. She could of made an effort and maybe try to get money for the father of her kids. In a way the journey to El Otro Lado was worth it for Reyna all the heartbreak her family experience gave her an opportunity and she took advantage of it because she finished school and she broke the cycle of poverty in her life. She didn't let her families struggles stop her from becoming something of herself.**

Reyna's return home was very emotional for her. She was caught in between the beautiful memories and the reality that she did not see before. As a child you never understand the implications of poverty all you know is rather you have food to eat or not. Going back home helped her realized what could have happened to her had she stayed there. She understood the opportunity that she had and the responsibility to make something of herself for all the people that do not have the same opportunity. Taking the trip at the point in her life reinstated the importance of what her father had always told them. She experienced the return different than her sister Mago since the trip did not have the same significance or effect on Mago. Mago wanted to make the trip as a stop before she went to Acapulco and the time spend in Iguala she looked down at the people who were still there. Reyna's return was to see the people she knew as a child and visit the placed she had once called home.

This book has really hit home for me in more than one way. As mentioned in previous assignments I left my family to come here when I was seven-years old. I was not left behind, I was sent away. Since the day I left I have visited my "family" once, when I was nineteen-years old. My return was a little different than Reyna since I did not exactly return to the place that I would consider the place I grew up in. The majority of my life in Mexico I lived in the town where my father was from and it was not until my last six months there that I lived in my mother's hometown. When I finally returned I went for a week and only to my mother's hometown, which is like a small city. My experience was very emotional since I was seeing my mother for the first since I left. I mainly spend time visiting family but I did not visit anyone outside of family since I did not remember anyone. My mother had remarried and had another

child with her current husband whom I was meeting for the first time. My siblings had grown up with them and I was the stranger in their home since everyone else had grown up there. At the time I spend a week there even though my sister, the only one I felt more comfortable with since she had moved to California, stayed for a month. I have not been back there since.

Was the journey worth it? Is it ever worth it? Is the chance for a “brighter future” worth what was lost? When she returns for Iguala her uncle says, “I rather be poor but together than have money and be apart.” How different would her life had been had her father decided to move to another city in Mexico where they could all go with him instead of going to another country and leaving his children without parents. Her family was lost from the time she was a toddler, her sister Mago had to become a mother before she was even considered a woman. I’ve often heard that anything worth doing is hard but what is considered “hard” in this saying? Being abuse, not having the support that every child should be entitle to is that worth it? When you have overcome these of difficulties should you be grateful because of the person it made you? I have been asking myself these questions for year and I still cannot answer that. I do not know how Reyna feels about it but I often wonder how different things would have been. For Reyna, based on the story, her life in Mexico was not that much better. She had the love of her grandmother but she was always chasing the parents that she had lost. Her mother was not there to care for her while she was in Mexico and she seemed to have followed Mago to the United State rather than her father. Neither parent did much for them emotionally but her father brought her to the United Stated and taught her the value of education even though he was the one that was in her way when she wanted to pursue it.

I am very much conflicted with my personal life. I have spent years making sure that I look at the positive in everything but I can't help to wonder how much different I would have been if I had grown up with a family. If I had stayed with my mother and siblings, or stayed with my aunt, or if I had been adopted when I was in foster care. There are millions of possibilities of where my life could have gone. For the purpose of this question, how much difference would growing up with my mother and siblings would have made on who I was. I now know one of my sisters. You can easily tell the differences between us. Our views of education, family, and overall look at life are different. In December I will be the first person in my family to graduate college. Neither of my older sister graduated high school. To them family is everything; they visit our mother every year and spend at least a month in Mexico. I have not returned since I was nineteen and my mother has not met my five-year old daughter. Would any of these differences have been different? I can't say. The only thing I can say is that maybe I would not feel broken if I had stayed.