BCSD Reconsideration Committee Checklist Evidence *for I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*

Educational Significance

SC Reading Literary Text, Standards 8- 11 Language, Craft and Structure

These standards cover author's use of words, phrases, text features. The poetry Julia writes as well as her use of Spanish words and phrases are worth examining for their craft and language.

Standard 11: Author's choice of point of view

The book is in Julia's point of view. Her voice tells us her story of her sister's death, the mystery behind it as well as her perspective as the daughter of undocumented immigrants. She struggles with the relationship with her parents and with depression. She also struggles with poverty and the book gives an honest perspective of a student who wants to rise above her financial situation and seeks high education.

Quality, Content, Manner of Presentation

This novel is such a well-written example of a teen growing up and maturing as she works through the death of her sister. She discovers that her sister is not who she thought she was and seeks to discover the mystery of who Olga really was. She also discovers in the difficult relationship with her parents, that her parents have a lot more depth than she gave them credit for.

The mystery drives the story as well as the difficult relationship with her family.

On page 330 is such a beautiful example of Julia's writing (via author Erika Sanchez) *"She opened the vault, the box in which she kept herself-old filmstrips of her life, her truth. Broken feathers, crushed mirrors creating a false gleam. She takes it all apart, every moment, every lie, every deception..."*

Avoidance of Pervasive Vulgarity

While the book does contain some profanity, I didn't see it as out of place with the characters or excessive. It wouldn't make sense to the reader if Julia and her friends didn't swear. In order to build realistic characters, profanity makes sense here. I think of the swearing I hear in my middle school and it didn't surprise me that the characters were swearing.

The book does depict Julia's first sexual experience and possibly a sexual assault (that part is kind of vague and she doesn't mention it again). Julia was describing her first sexual encounter not in a perverse way. It seemed like she didn't enjoy it particularly even though she cared for the boy. The conversation between her and her friend was a bit vulgar, it wasn't out of character for her friend to mention.

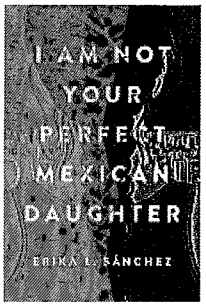
Appropriateness

I would not recommend this book for middle school based on the community standards, however, I do think this book should be in a high school library and is appropriate for that age level. I know this book wouldn't be for every student, but I do know that Julia's perspective is important for high school students. We have children of undocumented immigrants in our district, we have students who are struggling with relationships with their parents and with depression. We have students who are figuring out who they are and want to be the first to go to college. Julia's story is one of hope that she can

improve her circumstances and rise out of the poverty she was born into. It is also hopeful to see how her family overcomes the death of her sister and Julia's attempted suicide to improve their relationship and make some changes! It also shows growth and maturity on Julia's part as she discovers that her parents and her sister are more complex than she gave them credit for. She also finally is able to deal with depression and get help after her suicide attempt. She also strives to improve her education. While this story deals with very difficult topics, it handles them in a way that students who read this story can see hope in their own situations.

Online resources for Erika L. Sánchez's

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter



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THE SCENE

Curated by Steppenwolf's own Young Adult Council, The Scene is an exclusive opportunity for teens to score a cheap ticket to a Steppenwolf production, meet the artists involved with the play, and connect with like-minded teens. Each ticket includes dinner and a post-show discussion with the actors.

TICKETS ARE JUST $5

Purchase tickets at the door one half-hour before the show, in advance online, or in advance by calling Steppenwolf Audience Services at 312-335-1650 and use code YACSCENE. Teens can also use their Teen Arts Pass (TAP) to purchase tickets.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Scene: *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*
Saturday, March 14, 2020
Performance at 7:30pm with event to follow



STEP IN

Step In workshops are a free series that offer teens the chance to participate in hands-on theatre workshops led by some of the hottest theater artists we know, all while getting to learn more about Steppenwolf's Young Adult Council, an afterschool program for teens interested in careers in the arts.

ADMISSION IS FREE!

To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Education Associate Abhi Shrestha at ashrestha@steppenwolf.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Step In: MOVEMENT
Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Step In: VOICE
Wednesday, March 19, 2020

Step In: DIRECTING
Wednesday, May 6, 2020

At Steppenwolf: February 26 – March 21, 2020
On Tour with Storycatchers Theatre: March 23 – 28, 2020

STEPPENWOLF
FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Adapted by **Isaac Gómez**
Based on the novel by **Erika L. Sánchez**
Directed by Ensemble member **Sandra Marquez**

I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER



Study Guide

STEPPENWOLF FOR YOUNG ADULTS

19 20 SYA SEASON

Dear teachers,

Thank you for joining us for Steppenwolf for Young Adults' world premiere adaptation of *The New York Times* Best Seller, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sánchez. Sánchez's prolific novel follows the journey of Julia as she navigates the trials and tribulations of being a young Mexican girl in Chicago alongside the tragic death of her older sister, Olga – the epitome of the perfect Mexican daughter. When Julia discovers a not-so-simple secret left behind in the wake of her sister's death, she discovers that Olga was, perhaps, not so perfect after all. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* is a love letter to young Chicanas like Julia who, in trying to find the truth about the people and the world around them, end up finding themselves.

Chicago playwright and *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* adapter Isaac Gómez recalls:

When I first read [the novel], I couldn't put it down. Julia's wit and cynicism, her relationship to her mother and her sister, and her ultimate struggle with depression, anxiety, and suicide are all things I know too well. There were moments in reading the book that I held it close to my chest because I felt like I was reading my own secrets in Erika's words and the world she created – staring back at me from the pages of this book; these are moments when I am reminded I am not alone.

I did not grow up an imperfect Mexican daughter. But I grew up as the imperfect Mexican son among perfect Mexican men – I know that feeling of displacement. Of not being enough. Of being pressured into being something I just... wasn't. I know Julia's story because it is also mine, and so many other young women, femmes, and queer Mexicans in the country today. We are far from perfect. But we are here, and we are not going anywhere.

We are thrilled to be working with Isaac, along with Steppenwolf Ensemble members Sandra Marquez (director) and Karen Rodriguez (Julia) to bring Sánchez's beautiful word to life in our Upstairs Theatre.

We are equally excited to announce that following its four-week run at Steppenwolf and working in collaboration with Storycatchers Theatre for a third year, Steppenwolf Education will tour this production of *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* for a week to three Juvenile Justice Facilities in Illinois. Storycatchers Theatre, winner of the 2013 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, is a youth development arts organization that prepares court-involved and otherwise marginalized young people to make thoughtful life choices through the process of writing, producing and performing original theatre inspired by personal stories. We are thrilled to be able to continue this multi-year partnership with such an incredible organization and share this story with even more incredible young people around the Chicagoland area.

Thank you for joining us this season and for bringing your students to our campus. If you are interested in learning more about our programming, or how to get your young person, school, or organization involved with future Steppenwolf Education programming, please visit our website at steppenwolf.org/education.

See you at the theater!
The Steppenwolf Education Team

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RELAXED/SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE
Saturday, March 21 at 1:00pm, 3:00pm curtain – public performance

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE-INTERPRETED/ OPEN CAPTIONED PERFORMANCE
Friday, March 6 at 7:30pm – public performance

AUDIO-DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE AND TOUCH TOUR
Saturday, March 7 at 3:00pm (touch tour), 3:00pm curtain

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FINDING LAS MALCRIADAS: GETTING TO KNOW ERIKA L. SÁNCHEZ

By Education Apprentice Elon Sloan



Who is Erika L. Sánchez?

Erika L. Sánchez, author of *The New York Times* Best Seller *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, grew up in Cicero, Illinois, a suburb located immediately west of Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. The daughter of two undocumented Mexican immigrants, Sánchez describes her younger self as an avid reader, writer and an overall nerdy kid. Sánchez credits her teachers for fostering her passion for writing and seeing her "weird interests" and encouraging them. She fondly remembers one teacher who assembled packets of poetry for her to read, gifts she's kept since her youth. This support from her teachers led her to pursue a career in writing, and eventually she found her voice as a poet.

A Poet First

Writing *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* was a new kind of endeavor for Erika Sánchez, who had mostly written poetry in the past. In her poetry Sánchez uses lyricism to paint carefully crafted images. In her recently published book, *Lessons on Expulsion,* Sánchez paints images of young people growing up near the border in Mexico and young women traversing Chicago's many environments side by side. Descriptions of young women as they learn to deal with violence, sexism, and new experiences of sexuality are common throughout her poetry. In *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* Sánchez brings together many perspectives on what life is like for young people. The novel feels like an expansion of some of the moments captured in Sánchez's poetry and it similarly feels informed by her experience of growing up as a child of undocumented Mexican immigrants in Cicero.

> "I wanted to see myself in literature. As an avid reader, I looked everywhere. Where were all the messed-up Brown girls? Las malcriadas? The Latino weirdos?"

The Novel She Wished She Had

Sánchez's love of reading as a student led her to notice gaps in the works she had access to as a young person. She felt like she was unable to find very much in classic or young adult literature which reflected her own experiences back to her. She recalls "I wanted to see myself in literature. As an avid reader, I looked everywhere. Where were all the messed-up Brown girls? Las malcriadas? The Latino weirdos?" (Malcriada is a word in Spanish which can be translated as "badly raised girl". It can mean spoiled or pampered but it can also be used to say that there's something wrong or bad about someone's personality or way of being.) When she found Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* she loved it, but she felt like it was the only book she had which she could relate to. As well written as it was, it was also published the year she was born.

Sánchez's favorite writer is Toni Morrison, an author famous for writing about the historical experiences of Black women. One of Morrison's best know quotes is "If you find a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." After going through a time of difficulty with her mental health and her career in writing and publishing, Sánchez came back to that quote and took it as inspiration. She remembered her desire to read books which reflected her contemporary lived experiences as a young person. And part of what was missing from that picture for her was an honest depiction of the struggles so many young women of color face.

> "If you find a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."
>
> – Toni Morrison

Honesty in Experience

Sánchez wants *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* to be meaningful to everyone who reads it, but especially to young women of color. Sánchez said this about who she wanted her book to speak to: "Most important for me, I want young girls to feel like they matter. And that I see them. And that they are entitled to want more and to dream and to, you know, be who they are." The book includes experiences which can feel huge and insurmountable. From making decisions about sex, to understanding her family members' experiences of trauma, to dealing with serious mental health struggles, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* takes these big topics seriously and explores them fully.

The commitment to tackling all of these topics in one story seems to come from Sánchez's own sense that teen girls of color need stories which affirm that their lives and their struggles are normal and navigable, even if that might not feel true. Many topics she writes about in the book are related to real experiences she had as a teenager, and had to navigate without guidance. In creating the book she never had as a young person, Sánchez hopes to help young people who went through similar experiences as she did. She also hopes that learning through a character's journey can help people understand those experiences better even if they don't have them directly.

The Importance of Being Not Perfect

Sánchez takes a lot of joy in her protagonist Julia's imperfections. When talking about her own experience, Sánchez said, "I think that's a common story for young women, that so much is expected of them, and we don't always want to live up to those expectations. Sometimes, we're not what our parents expected, at all."

> "Sometimes, we're not what our parents expected at all."

Sánchez believes that an important part of telling stories to young people is telling stories which can reflect the complexity of their lives. Julia doesn't always respond to people in the most polite way, she sometimes makes unfair assumptions about people, and she often doesn't know how to handle her emotions. These qualities lead to relationship and communication challenges for Julia within the story, but they help readers relate to her through their own imperfections. Seeing Julia make mistakes and struggle but eventually figure out how to work through her challenges is one of the most effective ways Sánchez speaks to her readers about their own lives. At an event when asked what she wanted people to take away from this story she said this: "I just hope that, the way that I've been so influenced by books, ... others will be as well by my book. And I hope that even if it doesn't... change who they are as a person... it starts a conversation, or some sort of questioning..."

I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER

SHOW SYNOPSIS

By Artistic Apprentice Brenna Barborka

1 Julia's sister, Olga dies after being hit by a semi-trailer truck while crossing the street. At the funeral, Julia stands at the casket and observes the body of her *hermana* while lamenting that Olga was the "perfect Mexican daughter" who never dreamt of anything more than her boring job and sitting at home with their *Amá* and *Apá*, their mother and father.

2 After the funeral, Julia sneaks into Olga's room. An apparition of Olga appears and directs Julia to Olga's hidden lingerie, a mysterious note that says, "I love you," and a room key to the Continental Hotel. *Amá* discovers Julia snooping in Olga's room and grounds her. The next day, *Amá* tells Julia that she is going to have a *quinceañera* even though she is already fifteen.

3 Julia visits the Continental and Olga's best friend Angie's house to look for answers, but comes up empty-handed at both. Disheartened, she cheers herself up by going to her best friend Lorena's house in hopes of distracting herself where she tries marijuana for the first time. The next day, *Amá* forces Julia to go to her little *primo's* birthday party. Julia causes a scene by mouthing off to her *padres* and her *tio* and gets in even more trouble.

4 Julia journals and eats lunch with Lorena and Lorena's friend Juanga (whom Julia has a hard time getting along with). That night, Julia goes to a party with Lorena and Juanga where she runs into Olga's childhood friend Jazmyn. Jazmyn lets slip that Olga was seeing someone when she died, which Julia believes might connect to the hidden items in Olga's room.

5 Julia decides to ask *Amá* about her *hermana's* boyfriend. *Amá* is upset by Julia's questions and ends up grounding Julia rather than believe that Olga had a secret *novio*. While Julia doesn't find consolation in her mother, she does find it at school in Mr. Ingman, Julia's *profesor* who teaches English–Julia's favorite subject. Julia reveals that she thinks Olga's death was her fault because she was the reason that Olga had to take the bus instead of getting picked up by Amá. Mr. Ingman tries to help Julia see that she had no control over Olga's death.

6 Under an immense amount of pressure and incredibly sleep-deprived, Julia blows up at Angie, *Amá*, and *Apá* during her *quinceañera*. Her punishment is to spend the summer cleaning houses with *Amá*. The only silver lining of the summer is that Julia meets Connor–a cute boy from Evanston who likes all the things that Julia does. The two start dating.

7 A year has passed since Olga's death and Julia still has no answers about the secrets Olga kept. Then, like magic, Julia finds the key to Olga's room in an old box of waffles. She sneaks into Olga's room and takes the lingerie, note, and hotel room key.

8 Julia and Connor get closer and become more intimate; they decide that they're ready to have sex. They both have a positive experience and discuss consent and protection. Julia experiences many different emotions afterwards and she's eager to talk to Lorena and Juanga about it the next day.

9 One day Julia returns home, and learns that *Amá* has gone through her journal and ripped out every page with a swear word. All of her entries, poems, and stories are gone. *Amá* also finds the lingerie, room key, and note. Julia is unable to tell her truth about these items –that they belonged to Olga, not her– so *Amá* takes her phone away, grounds her and locks her out of Olga's room.

10 After weeks of not having her phone, Connor breaks up with Julia because they can't communicate. Julia starts to spiral and becomes disconnected from everything–her friends, school, *Amá, Apá, y todo*. Unable to find joy, and still suffering from the loss of her sister, Julia is driven to attempt death by suicide. Her parents force her to seek psychiatric help and she bonds with Dr. Cooke. Unsure of how to help, Julia's *padres* tell her that she's visiting her *familia* in Mexico.

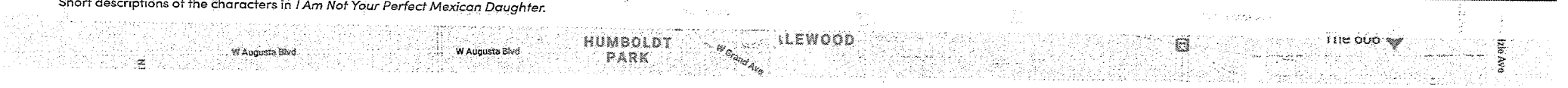
11 The night before Julia leaves, she gets into Olga's laptop and finds out she was seeing a married man with kids. She also finds an ultrasound and realizes that Olga was pregnant when she died. Julia boards a plane to Mexico with this secret. While there, her *abuela* tells her about her *padres* lives in Mexico and the hardships and violence they faced crossing the border to the states. Julia has a newfound appreciation for her life when she returns home.

12 Julia's college decision letters come in and she is disappointed to find that most of them are rejections. She is hopeless until she gets an acceptance letter from her dream school, NYU, which she decides to attend. When the time comes to move to New York, Julia bids her *Amá y Apá* farewell and, on the plane, meets a kind stranger who looks like Olga and is coincidentally also named Olga. Julia uses Olga's ultrasound as her bookmark and says, "How amazing is it... that I hold a piece of my sister right here in my hands?"

I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER

Character Descriptions By Education Apprentice Elon Sloan

Short descriptions of the characters in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter.*



Julia

played by Steppenwolf ensemble member Karen Rodriguez



This is Julia's story. She wants to become a famous writer and is always taking notes in her journal. She loves her family but often feels like a disappointment to them. Now that her sister, who was the perfect daughter, is dead, Julia feels more out of place than ever.

Olga

played by Dyllan Rodrigues-Miller



Julia's older sister. She was perfect until the day she died. But maybe she only looked perfect? Now that Olga's gone, Julia is asking questions she never asked while Olga was alive. It's almost like Olga herself is showing Julia where to look.

Amá

played by Charín Alvarez



Julia's amá, her mother. When Olga dies, it pushes her past her breaking point. She cares, but can't understand why Julia acts the way she does. Is it that Amá doesn't have enough love left for her disappointment of a daughter? The truth is more complicated than that.

Apá

played by Eddie Martinez



Julia's apá, her father. He's around, but he's not really there. He's quiet, but Julia knows he has to feel something about losing Olga. He also has to feel some concern for his only living daughter. Right? He and Amá are living their lives alongside Julia, but they feel so far away.

Lorena

played by Leslie Sophia Perez



Julia's best friend. Always around to keep Julia grounded. She's the one who always gets it. But, after Olga dies, Julia find herself brushing Lorena off more and more. And did Lorena get a new best friend? Maybe they're just on different pages these days.

Juanga

played by Robert Quintanilla



A new friend of Lorena's. He's given himself the same nickname as Mexican pop singer "Juan Gabriel", and like him doesn't mind being the center of attention. Juanga loves clothes, parties, and gossiping with Lorena. Juanga and Lorena seem to just get each other, and they both know a lot more about sex than Julia does. Does Julia even fit into their new friendship?

Connor

played by Harrison Weger



A friendly boy Julia meets while book shopping. He's from Evanston, he's white, and his family has way more money than hers. He's also pretty cute. Julia's never been friends with someone like him, but they both love reading and writing, and they have grand plans for college next year.

Mr. Ingman

played by Peter Moore



Julia's favorite teacher. Mr. Ingman is always trying to encourage Julia to stay focused on her schoolwork and on college. Sometimes though, it seems like he doesn't really see everything that's holding Julia back. Julia knows Mr. Ingman means well, but he's still an old white guy who's already been to college. Can he really help?

STEPPING INTO JULIA'S SHOES

An Interview with Karen Rodriguez

By former Young Adult Council member Ines Garcia-Valdivia



Steppenwolf ensemble member Karen Rodriguez, who plays Julia, sat down with former Young Adult Council member and recent Chicago Public School graduate Ines Garcia-Valdivia to discuss Karen's leading role in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*.

INES GARCIA-VALDIVIA: Thank you so much for taking some time to talk about *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* and your role in it. First, I want to know, what was your initial reaction to the story?

KAREN RODRIGUEZ: It's my pleasure! Honestly, I was shocked reading it! I don't think I've ever read a character in a novel that felt like it had been written just for me. I love Julia, she is my 15-year-old self. As I read the novel the first time, I cried with her and wanted to hug her and wanted her to get out and be a writer all at the same time! I think I relate the most to Julia's keen sense of self-awareness (and sometimes lack thereof), the embarrassing things that happen to her and that she does, her love of tacos, her awkwardness around boys, her dry humor, and her honest-to-a-fault type of candor. On the outside, I try to be like Lorena [Julia's best friend], but my true and private internal life is very intensely Julia. I love that Julia doesn't back down, even in the face of immense pressure and strife. She wants to take a bite out of life. What I envy of her is how much she notices. She's an astute observer of the world. So that's what I noticed in my initial reading: how very much I relate to Julia.

> "I love that Julia doesn't back down, even in the face of immense pressure and strife. She wants to take a bite out of life."

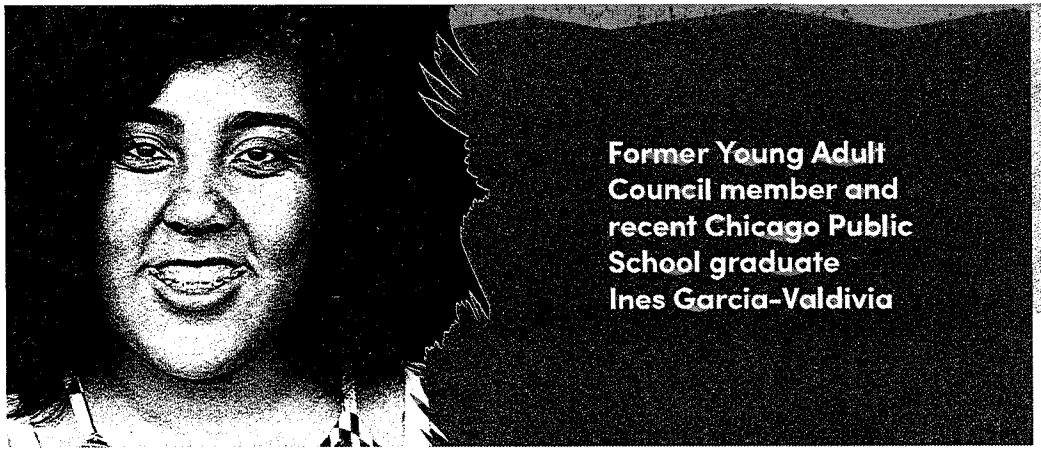
INES GARCIA-VALDIVIA: At times, Julia can come off as a bit abrasive or impertinent. How did you feel about those aspects of Julia?

KAREN RODRIGUEZ: I actually don't think of her like that. Before reading the book, I knew that was a main criticism of our heroine. But when I read it, I completely understood her choices. We're seeing someone go through immense grief and immense loneliness. She feels very unseen and misunderstood by her family, even by her best friends. And that's because she herself is lacking language to articulate her depression, even to herself. I think happens to a lot of people, especially young people and especially in the Latinx community. I think Julia is brilliant and with brilliance comes a sensitivity to the world around you. She is trying to make sense of a world without her sister in it. How could someone that young just die? And would it have been different if [she] had done something different that day? Those are very hard questions to grapple with.

INES GARCIA-VALDIVIA: This story has many complex themes and perspectives. What are some things that you've learned from this story?

KAREN RODRIGUEZ: To be kinder to myself. I see how Julia feels that no one really gets what she's going through. But the thing is, people do try to reach out to her, like her teacher Mr. Ingman. I think I am trying now to live in a place where I allow others to reach out to me and actually take their hand when they do. The story has also magnified for me the importance of talking about and taking care of our mental health. I know for sure in my own Mexican family that is not a thing. If you get depressed or are in a state of immense grief, people will say to get over it or "se te va a pasar" ("it will eventually go away"). And I think it's important for us to destigmatize going to therapy, doing meditation and attending to our mental health. We go to the gym to take care of our bodies. Our minds need that, too.

> "I think it's important for us to destigmatize going to therapy, doing meditation and attending to our mental health. We go to the gym to take care of our bodies. Our minds need that, too."



Former Young Adult Council member and recent Chicago Public School graduate Ines Garcia-Valdivia

INES GARCIA-VALDIVIA: I just graduated high school last spring and am now a freshman in college. Something I think will really resonant for high school students are the challenges Julia faces trying to apply to college and how she navigates her senior year. Do you have any advice for high schoolers who are in this moment of life?

KAREN RODRIGUEZ: Senior year is stressful! Fun fact about me: I was valedictorian of my class. And with that came an added pressure in terms of "what Ivy League school was I going to go to?!" And I think applying to college can be a culmination of all these really big questions: WHO ARE YOU GOING TO BE, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BECOME, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE? It's a lot of pressure, on its own. And even more so, if like Julia, there are other outside factors affecting one's decision, the pressure only builds. So, my advice? Research, research, research. Research schools, talk to your teachers/counselors, talk to people who went to the schools you're most interested in, talk to people who have the career you are interested in pursuing. Also, ask for help! People often have a plethora of wisdom just waiting to be mined. So, reach out! Also, when you're applying for college it can feel like you're deciding your future...but it's not. Go with your gut. Meet yourself where you're at, okay? Because that is all you can do. And if that changes? THAT IS OKAY. Life should change because YOU change. So, trust yourself.

INES GARCIA-VALDIVIA: Final question! Considering how many high school students will be seeing the show, is there anything you hope audiences take away from seeing this story?

KAREN RODRIGUEZ: I just hope young people see themselves; that they laugh and cry with Julia. And that through Julia's mistakes, they learn what not to do. And in that same breath, that even when you do make mistakes, compassion towards oneself is key. So often we're taught to have compassion for others, but I think this play is also about radical self-love and the ongoing journey of it. Love yourself, let people hold you up, and ultimately, do what it is that you want to do with your life.

"Love yourself, let people hold you up, and ultimately, do what it is that you want to do with your life."

Here's an example of Erika L. Sánchez's poetry. This poem follows the story of a girl named Jacinta, a common name for girls which is the feminine form of the Spanish word for "Hyacinth." Take some time to notice how the themes in this poem connect to those in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* and Sánchez's personal experiences.

Hyacinth

By Erika L. Sánchez

On the morning of Jacinta's
birth, the air smelled animal.
The blind rooster forever
confused by the mysteries of light.
After her final gasp of gratitude,
Alondra wiped the slime
from the baby's eyes and pierced
her ears with golden spikes.
Soon she'll learn to swallow
the cactus spines, she murmured.
As a girl, Jacinta spooned
beans and swept dirt floors
with sodden brooms. Her father,
merchant of pigs, always speckled
the flimsy horizon. Alondra
grew inward: a bundle of rags
and sticks in a corner, a cocoon
of debris. On the rickety walls—
ashen saints with their eyes
rolled back in blessedness,
whites the color of old wedding
dresses. The scent of lard, cornhusks,
and illness. When the news
of her father's shame came
on horseback, Jacinta covered
her head with frayed linen
and beat his bloody clothes
against the river-rocks. What
does it mean to forgive?
For years she slapped her own
face in the faded mirrors.

Once, a man strummed
his broken guitar in the plaza
as a hunchback whistled
against a willow tree. It was there
that Severo's gaze finally
found her, covered her skin
like tar. Under a clipped moon,
his voice made one circle
and then another, until Jacinta
signed her name with the letter X
on a wet and frigid morning.
The poverty of love. Beads
of blood. The children came
like swarms of locusts: a constellation
of sores on a baby's face,
a womb marked by nothing.
In meager times, haughty
women bequeathed her
leftovers filled with napkins
and toothpicks—dregs from their
finest feasts. The bloody egg
was more than a bad omen,
they said. That night the wind
smelled like wet copper.
The diseased mare brayed
in the loud suck of mud,
and in her winged loneliness,
Jacinta severed her braids and
begged for the threat of miracles.

Questions to consider:

- How does Erika L. Sánchez use imagery to tell us about Jacinta and the people in her life?
- What does the imagery in the poem tell you about place, and how Jacinta's environment affects her?
- How are there themes in this poem which relate to the themes of I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter?

FAMILIA O YO?

A Classroom Activity

By Teaching Artist Sonya Madrigal and Education Apprentice Elon Sloan

45 mins



ACTIVITY TIME: 45 minutes, can be implemented before or after students see the play.

Throughout *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, Julia struggles with her relationship to family. She loves her parents, but she feels like she's not the daughter they wanted. She has pride in being Mexican, but she feels like other people use her Mexican identity to define her in ways that don't fit, and she avoids visiting her family in Mexico as a result. However, once she travels to visit her extended family, her perspective shifts and she realizes how much she doesn't know about her family's experience living in Mexico and crossing the border. The story she believed about how she and her family relate changes and becomes something new.

One metaphor that represents this change in Julia is hair braiding. Hair braids are an important part of Mexican culture and fashion. When Julia goes to visit her family in Mexico she remembers that one of her favorite things about her grandmother is that she braids her hair. Although in many ways she feels disconnected from her heritage, having her hair braided by her grandmother reminds her of the importance of her family and of Mexican culture in her life.

In this activity, students will think about a memory in their lives that weaves together like the three strands of a braid; in imagining this story, they will uncover new perspectives, just like Julia does in the play.

NAME:

THE FIRST STRAND: YOUR STORY

Think about a memory of a time you faced a challenge relating to your family or your culture. Take a moment and write that story down from your perspective using the following "story ingredients":

- The story must include a sense of place: where were you when this memory took place? What can you remember about your surroundings?
- Your story should include at least one other person who was there when this moment occurred.
- Your telling of the story should allow the reader to know YOUR AGE. What details can you include about this memory to give the reader a sense of the storyteller's (YOUR) place in life?
- The story must utilize one of your senses: include a sound, smell, taste, etc. from something you remember from this memory.
- The story should be no longer than 5 sentences.

Here's an example from Julia's perspective:

The First Strand:

The fridge is empty, of course. The walls look dingy. It's the same kitchen where I've watched Amá and Olga put together meal after meal, for 15 years. I wish for the familiar smell of fresh tortillas, but in real life I just smell old dirty dishes. Now that this room has been empty for a week, it feels like I'm looking at the bright yellow walls through sunglasses. Honestly, the whole world seems to look a little bit sad since Olga died, so maybe it's me. But maybe it's that Amá, who used to clean the kitchen every day, has been in bed for two weeks. Could it really get this dirty this fast? "Amá," I shout, "I'm hungry!" Of course, I get no response.

The First Strand:

THE SECOND STRAND: THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Going back to the same story you just authored, think about how things happened from the perspective of someone else who experienced that same moment. Take a moment to take a step back from your feelings on the story to consider how this person was feeling in the moment. *Are they responding to the same thing that you are? Where do their emotions about the situation come from? How does this story make them feel about their family or culture?*

Using the same ingredients provided for strand one, write the story again from the point of view of the other person present during this moment.

Here's an example of the same story but this time from the perspective of Amá:

The Second Strand:

I hate this bed, it feels like it's trying to swallow me. But my hands weigh more than my arms, and there's lead in my shoulders pinning me down into my pillow, and even though I'm being smothered by my itchy comforter, I'm so cold. I can hear Julia walking around, what has she gotten into? She's in that nasty kitchen. I'm 44 years old, how could I let my kitchen get like that? But how could Julia and my husband let my kitchen get like that? "Amá," Julia shouts, "I'm hungry!" It's so rude to shout at your mother like that. But I know I should have made dinner last night and cleaned this morning. I have...had... two daughters, not just one. I should be helping Julia, but how?

The Second Strand:

THE THIRD STRAND: A NEW STORY

Read back to yourself strands one and two. *Did you notice anything new writing the same story from a new perspective? What most sticks out to you about the differences between strand one and two?*

Now that you've thought about that same story in two different ways, we're going to braid them together to make something new.

Find a new and different standpoint to write altogether. You could write in third person or from the perspective of a new onlooker or from a different point of view. Focus on what sticks out to you about the story now that you've written it twice. *Can you write a new story that combines your viewpoint AND someone else's and creates something brand new?*

Use these new ingredients in your story:

- The story must include a character changing their physical space. *Consider: Knowing that place is so important in the first two stories, how does making a change to the space affect the conflict between characters?*
- The story must include a moment of care between the characters. *Think about some of the ways you take care of the people in your life even when you feel you can't necessarily relate to them.*

Here's an example of the final story Julia might have written using the ingredients for the third strand:

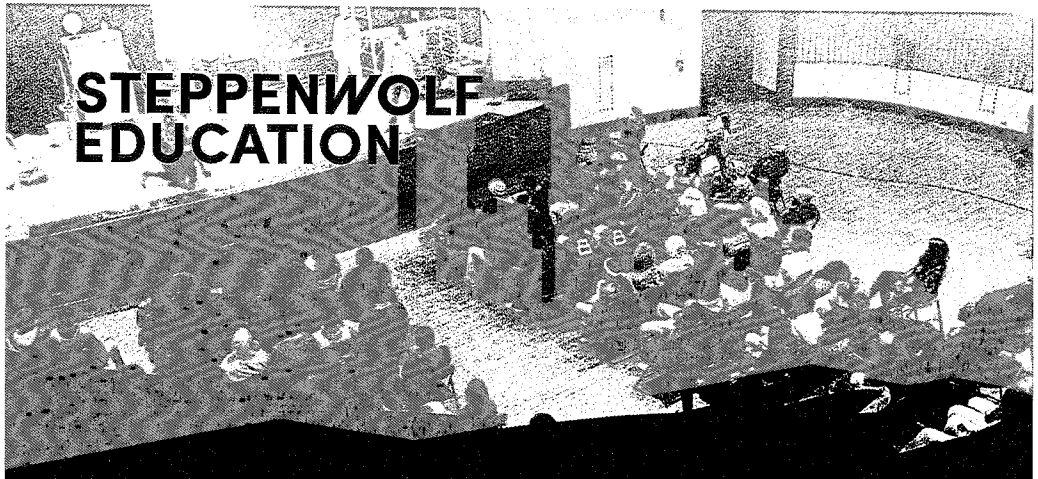
The Third Strand:

Julia is in the kitchen, but it doesn't remind her of the bright place she watched her mother and sister nurse pots of beans and shape tortillas. Amá is in bed, but she can't relax or sleep soundly, like she used to after wearing through the days' cleaning. Her mind is in the kitchen, with the mess, with Julia, with Olga. Julia shouts that she's hungry, but Amá can't fix it. Amá can't get up. Julia peels back the covers that seem to weigh her mother down. She looks down at her mother. She tries to force a smile. "Take my purse," Amá says. It's all she can do. But at least she is able to do something.

The Third Strand:

Questions to consider:

- Did completing the activity help you realize anything new about yourself or how you relate to your family or culture?
- What differences did you notice between your stories? Was it hard to consider your memory from other viewpoints?
- How did rewriting your story help you relate to Julia's journey in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*?



STEPPENWOLF EDUCATION

CITY CONNECTIONS

Partnering with others to use the arts to empower young people

WHAT IS CITY CONNECTIONS

City Connections is Steppenwolf Education's community engagement model rooted in building authentic and mutually beneficial long-term partnerships. By partnering with organizations that share our mission of using the arts to empower youth, we find authentic ways to bring barrier-free programming into communities we don't currently serve, with the hope that young and emerging adults can feel inspired to join us at Steppenwolf.

"Partnering with Steppenwolf has been really impactful. I can see the change in the youth. This partnership is beautiful because these kids need creativity. Steppenwolf sharing their workshops and knowledge of the arts to our kids is more profound than I think most of us realize."

- Max Cerda
Street Intervention Specialist
BUILD, Inc

800
YOUNG PEOPLE SERVED/YEAR THROUGH CITY CONNECTIONS

To learn more, contact Director of Education Megan Shuchman at mshuchman@steppenwolf.org

YOU'RE ENTITLED TO YOUR EMOTIONS: GRIEF AND MENTAL ILLNESS IN *I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER*

By Education Associate Abhi Shrestha

One of the most prominent questions in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* is: How do we cope with depression and grief amidst great personal loss? The story centers Julia, a 15-year-old Mexican-American teenager growing up in Chicago and navigating and exploring her own mental health after the death of her older sister. "I know mental illness is taboo, but I talk about my experiences [with mental illness] openly because I hope that they can help others. I want young people to know that it's okay to be mentally ill and that it's okay to ask for help," says the novel's author, Erika L. Sánchez. Julia's journey reminds us that we must talk openly and honestly about mental illness. If we hope to move this topic away from being taboo, we must acknowledge that it is okay to talk about our own mental health and grief. It is only through these conversations that we will be able to shed light on something that many of us, including Julia, deal with in different ways.

IT'S COMPLICATED

The death of a loved one affects everyone differently. It is not uncommon for people go through several stages of grieving after losing someone close ranging from shock and denial to anger and bargaining to acceptance and hope. We see Julia go through several stages of grieving throughout her journey. For example, when Julia is at her quinceañera and has a moment of anger towards Olga's best friend Angie. When asked by her best friend if she's okay, Julia responds "No, Lorena. I'm not okay. Okay? I'm not, I'm not, I'm not." The guilt that Julia feels at various moments throughout the play is another stage of grief. This is clear when she is talking to her English teacher Mr.Ingman and mentions "...and I can't shake this feeling that, um. That I'm missing something... Sometimes I think it's my fault. That Olga's, um... that she's gone...?". Another sign of Julia navigating grief is her inability to sleep. It is common for individuals to have newfound insomnia when going through grief as they may have stressful thoughts about their loved ones that keep them up. On multiple occasions, Julia mentions her difficulty sleeping,

> *"I haven't been able to sleep. My body is begging for rest but I just... can't fall asleep. Every time I close my eyes, she's right there."*

The grief that Julia feels is totally normal, but it complicates many of her emotions and relationships with friends, family and loved ones. Though there is no specific timeline for grief, it is important to reflect on when grief can turn into depression. Dr. Michael Miller, an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, notes that with both grief and depression, "People cry. They feel depressed. [They have] trouble sleeping. They may not have an appetite. They may not feel like doing anything. They may not take pleasure in anything." All these symptoms we see Julia navigating on her journey.

Grief and depression can look very similar and often overlap according to Dr. Miller. He acknowledges "the death of a significant other can be the catalyst that brings depression to the foreground." With Julia, we see how the death of Olga heightens the stress she feels as the daughter of immigrants and amplifies the loneliness she feels, ultimately leading to her suicide attempt in the play. When Julia speaks to Dr. Cooke after the attempt, she describes the deep well of emotions that have been accumulating, and the depression that she's been navigating:

> *"It's like... how can I explain...first, my sister dies, which has been a living hell. And... there's so much I want to do, but can't. The life I want seems impossible, and it just gets so... frustrating."*

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Julia is juggling a lot of responsibilities and expectations in this story. While grieving the loss of her sister, she still has to apply for colleges, go to school, work with her mom, have a quinceañera that she doesn't want, navigate her first sexual experience, and so much more. A report from the U.S Surgeon General notes that "one in five children and adolescents will face a significant mental health condition during their school years." Today's teenagers are facing higher stress and anxiety rates than any other generation, leading to a notable increase of teen suicide rates in the U.S.

These rates are even higher among young Latinas in America. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, 10.5% of Latina adolescents aged 10–24 years in the U.S. attempted death by suicide in 2017. Unfortunately, conversations around depression and mental illness are often taboo, especially in communities of color. This lack of dialogue accompanied by a lack of resources and access to health care exacerbates issues surrounding mental health for young people of color. While Julia does speak about her depression, it's never with her family. For example, Julia mentions "I feel so lonely that I don't know what to do with myself. I usually wait till my parents fall asleep and then I just bawl my eyes out."

What are the underlying reasons Julia doesn't have an honest conversation about her loneliness with her parents?

NO SHAME IN TALKING

As Dr. Cooke reminds Julia; "You're entitled to your emotions. There shouldn't be any shame in that." And that's true, there shouldn't be any shame in talking about our mental health. The first step towards addressing the mental health issues in high school settings, and in general, is understanding them on a deeper level. It's important to look at Julia's story and think about how her story might be different if she was able to have more transparent conversations about her mental well-being. But talking about it is only the first step, many of the issues around mental illness require professional support like any other illness. We see positive change in Julia's life after her visit with Dr. Cooke, starting anti-depression and anti-anxiety medications, and beginning therapy.

Sánchez hopes, "people can learn from what I've gone through and see that recovery is possible." Let's allow Julia's journey to inform our work to destigmatize conversations around grief and mental health as we work together to address mental health the best we can.

RESOURCES

Steppenwolf Education works in partnership with licensed social workers from Prime Center for Women and Children, Chicago Children's Center for Behavioral Health and Communities in Schools of Chicago. Social workers will be present at each school performance of the show. Please contact Education Associate Abhi Shrestha (ashrestha@steppenwolf.org) for more information about these organizations and how to connect with them.

Youth in need of professional help should seek out of one of these resources:

Mujeres Latinas in Accion
mujereslatinasenaccion.org | 773.890.2676

National Runaway Safeline
1800runaway.org/youth-teens | 1.800.786.2929

Youth Outreach Services
yos.org/services/counseling | 773.777.7112

In the event of an emergency, young people should call 9-1-1 or the National Runaway Safeline.

BEST SELF BAILE

A Classroom Activity

By Teaching Artist Wilfredo Ramos Jr.

45 mins



ACTIVITY TIME: 45 minutes; to be implemented after students see the play.

When Julia' "perfect" sister, Olga, dies unexpectedly in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, Julia experiences a lot of pressure from her parents to be like her sister and to play the role of a "Perfect Mexican Daughter" who cooks, cleans, and obeys her parents. But Julia is not her sister and Olga's footsteps aren't ones Julia wants to follow.

In this activity, students will explore how they can step away from the version of SELF others want them to be and into the SELF they want to be.

STEP ONE – BECOMING JULIA

5 mins



Have students read the following passage from *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* aloud. Read the passage at least twice. Each time invite a different reader to read the passage.

JULIA

Remember all the times Amá and Apá sent us to Mexico? Those were the best times, huh? I can still hear your laugh. I can still feel the sun on our cheeks. I can feel your arm around my neck, whispering in my ear, telling me to enjoy this for Amá and Apá since they'll never get to come back here. The sacrifices they made bringing us to Chicago. Leaving their entire world behind. Is that why you never left?

You were so much better than me.

Cleaning...

Cooking...

The perfect daughter.

The perfect Mexican daughter.

STEP TWO – IMAGINING "PERFECT"

5 mins



Ask students to take a moment to imagine a role that someone else has cast them in. For Julia, that role is Perfect Mexican Daughter. For someone else, that role could be Honor Student, Church Youth Leader, "Mother" to Younger Siblings, Teacher's Pet, Bossy Older Sister, Tagalong Little Brother, Confidant, Pianist, Gamer or anything else they can imagine. Whatever roles they choose, have students make sure that the roles are ones that other people have chosen for them and that they feel comfortable talking about their choices with their peers. Once students have thought of a role, have them write their responses on a piece of paper.

Now, have students name three habits that they think a perfect "----------" consistently practices. Remind students: *These habits don't need to be ones that you currently practice. Just based on your own knowledge and experience, what does a perfect "----------" do?* Once students have thought of three habits, have them write them down.

Example: For Julia, a Perfect Mexican Daughter....
1) Cleans
2) Cooks
3) Obeys her parents

Once students have thought of three habits of a role someone else has cast them in, have them write them down on the same piece of paper.

STEP THREE – IMAGINING FUTURE SELVES

5 mins



Now, have each student think of a role that they would cast for themselves. The roles students choose should be ones that they aspire to play someday. If Julia were doing this exercise, she might cast herself as a Famous Writer. Perhaps for someone else that is a Model Student or a Winning Poet or a Fabulous Painter. Ask students: *What role would you cast for yourself?* Have them write their responses on the same piece of paper.

Invite students to name at least three habits that they think a person in their chosen role practices. Have students write their ideas on the same piece of paper.

Example: For Julia, a Famous Writer might....
1) Always carry a notebook and pen
2) Remember the littlest details to add to a future story
3) Engage with people in all different settings as fodder for new characters

STEP FOUR – MOVEMENT PRACTICE

15 mins



Invite students to rise to their full heights according to their individual abilities. For this portion of the activity, the facilitator has the option to have students complete the following tasks wherever they are or gather the group in a circle.

Guide your students with the following prompts. Feel free to add, adjust, or remove prompts as you are inspired.

Centering Prompts (2 minutes)

- Take a breath.
- Notice where your attention is right now. Is it here with you in this moment? Is it somewhere else?
- Take another breath. As you breathe, let go of anything else on your mind and bring your attention to this moment.
- Notice how you feel in your body right now. What feels comfortable? What feels uncomfortable?
- Take another breath.
- Take a stretch for yourself to help you get more comfortable.
- Take another breath.
- Anytime you start to lose focus, feel free to take a breath and come back to this centering pose.

Sequence One: Becoming "Perfect" Prompts (5 minutes)

- Remember the role that someone else chose for you. Remember one of the habits that a person in this role does. Create a gesture or movement to represent this habit. This movement should be one that you can repeat.

  Example: Julia might kneel and move her hand in a circle over the floor to show how she thinks a Perfect Mexican Daughter cleans.

- Create a gesture or movement for a second habit.
- Create a gesture or movement for a third habit.
- Create a word or sound that expresses how you feel in this role.

  Example: Julia might groan each time she bends down to kneel.

- Combine all three movements and your sound into a single sequence. Pay attention to how you move from one movement to the next. Pay attention to your breath. *Before students combine their movements, this is an opportunity for you to model an example.*
- Remember your sequence and let it go.

Sequence Two: Becoming Our Future Selves (5 minutes)

- Remember the role that you chose for yourself. Remember one of the habits a person in this role does. Create a gesture or movement to represent this habit. This movement should be one that you can repeat

  Example: Julia, as the Famous Writer might pretend to write in a notebook.

- Create a gesture or movement for a second habit.
- Create a gesture or movement for a third habit.
- Create a word or sound that expresses how you feel in this role.

  Example: Julia might laugh.

- Combine all three movements and your sound into a single sequence. Pay attention to how you move from one movement to the next. Play attention to your breath. *Before students combine their movements, this is an opportunity for you to model an example.*

From First to Second Sequence (3 minutes)

- Remember your first sequence.
- Practice transitioning from your first sequence to your second sequence at least twice.
- Breathe, and let your dances go.

STEP FIVE – CAN I HAVE THIS DANCE?

15 mins



Invite students to form pairs, or to find a "dance partner." Have partners introduce themselves. Once all students are paired up, invite partners to take turns sharing their sequences, one at a time.

Once all pairs have shared their sequences, invite partners to discuss the following: *What differences did you notice between the first and the second sequences? What connections can you make between your sequences? How did it feel to embody and witness each other's sequences?*

Invite the full group to discuss the following: *What actions can we and other people take to help us live more authentically in our bodies?*

STEPPENWOLF EDUCATION

COST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESIDENCY

$0

PER SCHOOL

IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

Steppenwolf Education reaches 2,500 students each year through its in-school residency work, pairing teaching artists and classroom teachers to enrich students' experiences of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults plays on our stages.

"I am thankful to have this relationship with Steppenwolf because it is so student centered. The students' faces light up as they are talking enthusiastically about the plays and the workshops. They are sharing their experiences and gaining self-confidence well after our workshops are complete!"

– Mary Rossi, Residency Teacher, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences



TEACHING ARTIST COHORT

Steppenwolf Education Teaching Artists partner with classroom teachers, exploring the themes of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults season in workshops with thousands of students across the Chicagoland area.

– Cara Greene Epstein, Facilitator of Curriculum and Instruction

To learn more, contact Interim Senior Manager of Education Programs Amanda Dunne Acevedo at aacevedo@steppenwolf.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

We at Steppenwolf are thrilled to continue our work with the Chicago Public Library (CPL) as a part of our City Connections partnership—a programming model focused on identifying authentic ways to bring barrier-free programming into communities we don't currently serve, with the hope that young adults can feel inspired to join us at Steppenwolf.

As a part of this partnership, we turned to the Chicago Public Library's Teen Services and Content Curation Departments to provide their expert opinions on ways teachers and students might dive deeper into the world of this production. The following lists have been prepared by Chicago Public Library staff as a resource guide to help you and your students explore themes and topics related to *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter.* Learn more about what CPL has to offer at chipublib.org. And see the opposite page for information about the 2020 ChiTeen Lit Fest!

RECOMMENDATIONS

FICTION

AMERICAN STREET BY IBI ZOBOI
On the corner of American Street and Joy Road, Fabiola Toussaint thought she would finally find *une belle vie*—a good life. But after they leave Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Fabiola's mother is detained by U.S. immigration, leaving Fabiola to navigate her loud American cousins; the grittiness of Detroit's west side; a new school; and a surprising romance, all on her own. Just as she finds her footing in this strange new world, a dangerous proposition presents itself, and Fabiola soon realizes that freedom comes at a cost. Trapped at the crossroads of an impossible choice, will she pay the price for the American dream?

BRIDGE BY PATRICK JONES
José can't keep up. As the only English speaker in a family of undocumented immigrants, he handles everything from taking family members to the doctor to bargaining with the landlord. Plus he works two jobs. With all this responsibility, he's missing a lot of school. When he does make it, he falls asleep in class. José knows he has to turn things around if he wants to graduate from Rondo Alternative High School. Can he raise his grades enough to have a shot at college and a better life? Or will he be forced to drop out of school for good?

CUBA 15 BY NANCY OSA
Violet Paz has just turned fifteen, a pivotal birthday in the eyes of her Cuban grandmother. But while Violet is half Cuban, she's also half Polish, and more importantly, she feels 100% American. Except for her zany family's passion for playing dominoes, smoking cigars, and dancing to Latin music, Violet knows little about Cuban culture, nada about quinces, and only tidbits about the history of Cuba. So when Violet begrudgingly accepts Abuela's plans for a quinceañera - and as she begins to ask questions about her Cuban roots-cultures and feelings collide.

LOVE, HATE AND OTHER FILTERS BY SAMIRA AHMED
Seventeen-year-old Maya Aziz is torn between worlds. There's the proper one her parents expect for their good Indian daughter: attending a college close to their suburban Chicago home and being paired off with an older Muslim boy her mom deems "suitable." And then there is the world of her dreams: going to film school and living in New York City–and pursuing a boy she's known since grade school. But in the aftermath of a horrific crime perpetrated hundreds of miles away, her life is turned upside down. The community she's known since birth becomes unrecognizable; neighbors and classmates are consumed with fear, bigotry, and hatred. Ultimately, Maya must find the strength within to determine where she truly belongs.

NON-FICTION

1 **AMERICANIZED: REBEL WITHOUT A GREEN CARD BY SARA SAEDI**
At thirteen, bright-eyed, straight-A student Sara Saedi uncovered a terrible family secret: she was breaking the law simply by living in the United States. Only two years old when her parents fled Iran, she didn't learn of her undocumented status until her older sister wanted to apply for an after-school job, but couldn't because she didn't have a Social Security number. Fear of deportation kept Sara up at night, but it didn't keep her from being a teenager. From discovering that her parents secretly divorced to facilitate her mother's green card application to learning how to tame her unibrow, Sara pivots gracefully from the terrifying prospect that she might be kicked out of the country at any time to the almost-as-terrifying possibility that she might be the only one of her friends without a date to the prom.

2 **(DON'T) CALL ME CRAZY: 33 VOICES START THE CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH EDITED BY KELLY JENSEN**
To understand mental health, we need to talk openly about it. Because there's no single definition of crazy, there's no single experience that embodies it, and the word itself means different things—wild? extreme? disturbed? passionate?—to different people. In *(Don't) Call Me Crazy,* thirty-three actors, athletes, writers, and artists offer essays, lists, comics, and illustrations that explore a wide range of topics.

3 MULTI-MEDIA

THIS IS NORMAL (PODCAST)
This is Normal is a podcast where young people talk about their own mental health challenges–and how they got through them. Because when we share our stories, we can all feel a little less alone.

4 **15: A QUINCEAÑERA STORY (FILM)**
15: A Quinceañera Story is a collection of four short documentary films, follows five Latina girls all observing the traditional rite of passage of the quinceañera, a celebration of their fifteenth birthdays. The documentary chronicles the girls and their families as they navigate the complexities of coming of age in the U.S.

POETRY

5 **LESSONS ON EXPULSION BY ERIKA L. SÁNCHEZ**
Poet, novelist, and essayist Erika L. Sánchez's powerful debut poetry collection explores what it means to live on both sides of the border—the border between countries, languages, despair and possibility, and the living and the dead. Sánchez tells her own story as the daughter of undocumented Mexican immigrants and as part of a family steeped in faith, work, grief, and expectations. The poems confront sex, shame, race, and an America roiling with xenophobia, violence, and laws of suspicion and suppression. With candor and urgency, and with the unblinking eyes of a journalist, Sánchez roves from the individual life into the lives of sex workers, narco-traffickers, factory laborers, artists, and lovers. What emerges is a powerful, multifaceted portrait of survival.

ELECTRIC ARCHES BY EVE L. EWING
Electric Arches is an imaginative exploration of black girlhood and womanhood through poetry, visual art, and narrative prose. Blending stark realism with the fantastical, Ewing takes us from the streets of Chicago to an alien arrival in an unspecified future, deftly navigating boundaries of space, time, and reality with delight and flexibility.

Parents, educators and teens interested in learning more about teen programming at the Chicago Public Library should visit chicagaopubliclibrary.org/teens and save the date for the ChiTeen Lit Fest on Saturday, April 25!

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Aligned With Classroom Activities in This Study Guide

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 1:

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

See 'Familia O Yo?' on page 14 and 'Best Self Baile' on page 20

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 2:

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

See '*I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* Show Synopsis' on page 6

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 3:

Analyze how and why individuals, events and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

See 'Best Self Baile' on page 20

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 10:

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

See 'Finding Las Malcriadas' on page 2

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 3:

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

See 'Familia O Yo?' on page 14

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 4:

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

See 'Familia O Yo?' on page 14

If you need further information on how grade-specific standards fit into these anchor standards, please let us know.

Acknowledgements

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S19 Illinois Reads Final Curriculum
Illinois Reads Books

Title of Book	*I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* Author: Erika L. Sánchez Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf Date Published: October 2017		
Title of Unit	*English Language Arts*		
Grade level (interest)	**11th Grade**	**Reading Grade level**	5th grade
Lexile Level	**HL730L**	**Guided Reading level**	N/A
A. Purpose for Instruction/ Essential Questions/ Theme	**Purpose:** - The purpose of this mini-unit is to engage students in peer discussions about cultural perspectives, positive relationships, and different experiences and how that impacts their identity. Students will use background knowledge, inferencing, connecting, and determining importance to help identify these aspects within the text and reflect on how it impacts their own lives. **Essential Questions:** - How can we use background knowledge to help identify different cultural perspectives? - What can our personal experiences tell others about our identity and why it is important in shaping us? **Theme:** - Cultural Perspectives and Experiences		
Resources Used with Citations	Harvey, Stephanie & Anne Goudvis (2017). *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement,* 3rd. Ed. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. Lambert, K. (2012). *60 Formative Assessment Strategies* (pp. 1-7) [Chart]. OCPS Curriculum Services.		

B. Alignment to the depth of the Common Core – Standards addressed and assessed

CCSS ELA Standards	1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. 2. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.

	3. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6 Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement). 4. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

C. Student Learning Outcomes – Targeted unit goals

Lesson 1:

- Students will be able to **distinguish** *(Understand-Bloom's Taxonomy)* differences between cultural perspectives through peer discussions.
- *(Level One- Depth of Knowledge)*

Lesson 2:

- Students will be able to **interpret** *(Apply-Bloom's Taxonomy)* the point of view of the main character in the stated section by making inferences using a graphic organizer with textual evidence.
- *(Level Two Skill- Depth of Knowledge)*

Lesson 3:

- Students will be able to **compare and contrast** *(Analyze-Bloom's Taxonomy)* their own experiences with the character's experience by creating poems.
- *(Level Three Strategic Thinking- Depth of Knowledge)*

Lesson 4:

- Students will be able to **support** *(Evaluate-Bloom's Taxonomy)* the meaning of the text using textual evidence (drawing upon tone, language, author's choice of words) by writing a paragraph about the chosen passage.
- *(Level Four Extended Thinking- Depth of Knowledge)*

Webb's Depth of Knowledge: Recall, Skill/Concept, Strategic Thinking, Extended Thinking

D. Text Sections to be read closely with plans to support reading and discussion – identify pages

Lesson Plan 1: Pages 188-192
Lesson Plan 2: Pages 227-229
Lesson Plan 3: Pages 329-331

Lesson Plan 4: Pages 338-340

Academic Language to be supported at word, syntax and discourse levels	**Academic Language:** Lesson Plan 1: - Background Knowledge - Cultural Perspectives Lesson Plan 2: - Inference - Point of View Lesson Plan 3: - Connecting - Sensory Language Lesson Plan 4: - Determining Importance - Tone - Figurative language - Connotative language
Vocabulary	**Vocabulary:** Lesson Plan 1: - Vermin (pg. 191) - Fair-trade (pg. 192) - Artisanal (pg. 192) Lesson Plan 2: - Americanized (pg. 228) - Motherland (pg. 228) - Tamarind (pg. 229) Lesson Plan 3: - Anxiety (pg. 329) - Mental distortions (pg. 329) - Serenity (pg. 331) - Arabesques (pg. 331) Lesson Plan 4: - N/A

Bloom's Levels Addressed: (Check all that apply)			
Remembering		Analyzing	X
Understanding	X	Evaluating	X
Applying	X	Creating	

E. Instructional Lessons

Research Based Strategies [Tied to STW & standards]	**STW Strategies:**
	Lesson Plan 1: Building On Background Knowledge - Source: (Harvey& Goudvis, 2017) - Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D Lesson Plan 2: Questioning - Source: (Harvey& Goudvis, 2017) - Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4 Lesson Plan 3: Connecting - Source: (Harvey& Goudvis, 2017) - Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6 Lesson Plan 4: Determining Importance - Source: (Harvey& Goudvis, 2017) - Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Brainstorming for Lessons

Interactive activities for each lesson	**Technology Activities:** ***Pages for technology are included in the appendix**
	Lesson Plan 1: *Venn-Diagram Identifying Cultural Perspectives* - Compare and Contrast Julia and Connor's cultural perspectives and using a Venn Diagram to distinguish differences. - Students can write on the board, write on sticky notes and paste it on the board, or teacher can type the answers into the PowerPoint. Lesson Plan 2: *Inferencing Graphic Organizer*

- Create a graphic organizer with the three characters in the passage. Identify what the author says, what the evidence is, and how that infers the point of view of the character.
- Complete Julia and Amá's together.
- Students can write on the board, write on sticky notes and paste it on the board, or teacher can type the answers into the PowerPoint.

Lesson Plan 3: *Mind Map*

- Create a mind map to analyze Julia's experiences that she wrote about in her poem.
- Together, look at the poem, identifying phrases that reflect an event in Julia's life, and look at the descriptor words.
- Students can write on the board, write on sticky notes and paste it on the board, or teacher can type the answers into the PowerPoint.

Lesson Plan 4: *Analyzing the Text*

- Analyze the text of the passage by underlining, highlighting, or staring words or phrases to determine key ideas.
- Together, go sentence by sentence, breaking down the passage. Teacher does several to model, then complete the rest together.
- Students can come up and highlight, star, or underline. Teacher can also type into the PowerPoint.

You Do Activities:

***Pages for You Do activities are included in the appendix**

Lesson Plan 1: *Venn-Diagraming Identifying Cultural Perspectives*

- Students will create a Venn-Diagram to distinguish their own cultural perspectives from a character's in the book.

Lesson Plan 2: *Inferencing Graphic Organizer*

- Students will complete the last portion, for Apá, on their own.
- Students will reflect on the points of view, write about it, share with a partner, and then share out in whole group discussion.

Lesson Plan 3: *Mind Map and Poem*

- Students will create a mind map of their own experiences.
- Students will use their mind map to help them complete their own poem, replicating Julia's poem.

Lesson Plan 4: *Flow Chart and Paragraph*

- Students will complete the flow chart using the sentence stems provided.
- Students will include evidence from the text to support their ideas.
- Students will use the flow chart to help create a paragraph outlining their reasoning.

Lesson 1 Overview

Objective: Students will be able to **distinguish** *(Understand-Bloom's Taxonomy)* differences between cultural perspectives through peer discussions.

Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

Materials:

- PowerPoint Slides 2-3
- Student Venn-Diagram Sheet on Slide 4
- Passage and book: pg. 188-192

Procedure

1. **Hook:** Ask students what makes their cultural identity unique. Ask follow-up questions such as "why is that important?" or "what does this tell us about you?"
2. **Academic Language:** Introduce the academic language and lesson vocabulary to students. Ask students what they think background knowledge and cultural perspectives mean. Support their definition if need be.
   - Background Knowledge
   - Cultural perspectives
   - Vermin (pg. 191)
   - Fair-trade (pg. 192)
   - Artisanal (pg. 192)
3. **Complete Technology Activity:** Discuss with students the differences between Julia and Connor's cultural perspectives. Complete PowerPoint slide 3. Responses can be typed in by the teacher, written on sticky notes and pasted on the board by students, or written on the white board by students.
   - **I Do:** Teacher will identify differences between the characters' family, education, and culture.
   - **We Do:** As a class, identify differences between the characters' ethnicity and religion. Come up with several other differences for both Julia and Connor.
   - **You Do:** Have students identify similarities between Julia and Connor on their own. Let students work on their own, share with a partner, and then share out loud in class to complete the Venn-Diagram
4. **Complete Individual Activity:** Hand out a blank Venn-Diagram for students to complete. Have students compare and contrast their own cultural perspectives with a character from the novel. Collect the handout from students at the end of class.

Technology pages:	5. **Formative Assessment:** Pass out index cards to each student. Have them write a 1 sentence summary of one big idea that was discussed in class and one question/statement about a concept that was confusing. Collect index card at the end of class. 6. **Wrap-up:** Have students share out what they reflected on in their index cards. PowerPoint Slides 2-3, Student Copy on Slide 4

Lesson 2 Overview	**Objective:** Students will be able to **interpret** *(Apply-Bloom's Taxonomy)* the point of view of the main character in the stated section by making inferences using a graphic organizer with textual evidence. **Standard:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors. **Materials:** - PowerPoint Slides 5-6 - Student Copy Slide 7 - Book and passage: pg 227-229 1. **Hook:** Ask students about their thoughts on the passage. Example questions: What were your thoughts when reading this? How did the conversation with Julia's parents leave you feeling? What do you think Julia was feeling or experiencing during this time? What do you think it was like for her parents to come to this decision? 2. **Academic Language:** Introduce the academic language and lesson vocabulary to students. Ask students what they think inferencing and point of view mean. Support their definition if need be. - Inferencing - Point of View - Americanized (pg. 228) - Motherland (pg. 228) - Tamarind (pg. 229) 3. **Complete Technology Activity:** Discuss how point of view plays a role in the characters of the story and how that impacts their actions, feelings, and experiences. Handout the copy of PowerPoint slide 7 to students for them to complete.

- **I Do:** Teacher will model and fill out Julia's section first. Explain what part of the text you will be using, explain why it is important in determining the point of view, and what Julia's point of view is. Ask students if they have questions.
- **We Do:** As a whole class, complete the section for Amá next. Have students come up to the board and write their ideas in or write in on a sticky note and paste it on the board. Discuss students' responses. Ask students if they have questions.

4. **Complete Individual Activity (You Do):** Have students complete the section for Apá individually. Walk around and monitor students' activity. Scaffold students accordingly and be available for questions.
5. **Formative Assessment and Wrap-Up:** Give students time to reflect on the points of view and what they wrote for Apá. Have students share with a partner, and then share out in whole group discussion. Teacher will collect the written reflection at the end of class.

Technology pages:

Power Point slide 5-6, Student Copy Slide 7

Lesson 3 Overview

Objective: Students will be able to **compare and contrast** *(Analyze-Bloom's Taxonomy)* their own experiences with the character's experience by creating poems.

Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6
Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Materials:

- PowerPoint Slide 8-9
- Student Mind Map Sheet slide 10
- Book and passage: pg. 329-331

1. **Hook:** Ask students what are some important events that have impacted their lives. Have students reflect and share out. Explain to students that each person has their own unique set of events that impact their own experiences and life.
2. **Academic Language:** Introduce the academic language and lesson vocabulary to students. Ask students what they think connecting and sensory language mean. Support their definition if need be.
   - Connecting
   - Sensory Language
   - Anxiety (pg. 329)
   - Mental distortions (pg. 329)
   - Serenity (pg. 331)

	- Arabesques (pg. 331) 3. **Complete Technology Activity:** Read Julia's poem to students. Ask them for their initial thoughts and reactions after reading it. Questions to ask could be: How does this make you feel? What do you think Julia was feeling? What events do you think she included? Why do you think she chose to include these events into her poem? Explain the Mind Map to the students. Begin with Julia's overall experience in the middle, with several important events branching off, and then descriptor words she included in her poem for those events. - **I Do:** Teacher identifies two events with their descriptors. Model thinking about how and why those descriptor words relate to those events. Ask students if they have questions. - **We Do:** As a class, identify descriptor words for event three. Identify a fourth event and descriptor words. Have students write their response on the board, or type it in as they go through. Pause for questions if students have any. 4. **Complete Individual Activity (You Do):** Hand out a blank Mind Map sheet to students. Have students complete the mind map sheet based on their own experiences and events. Have students use their own Mind Maps to recreate a poem like Julia wrote. Scaffold students and provide further examples if needed. 5. **Formative Assessment:** Have students complete a 3-2-1. Students write down 3 key words they learned, 2 new ideas, and 1 thought to think about. Collect students' reflection to monitor their progress. 6. **Wrap-up:** Have students share out one thing from their 3-2-1.
Technology pages:	PowerPoint Slides 8-9, Student Copy on Slide 10

Lesson 4 Overview	**Objective:** Students will be able to **support** *(Evaluate-Bloom's Taxonomy)* the meaning of the text using textual evidence (drawing upon tone, language, author's choice of words) by writing a paragraph about the chosen passage. **Standard:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. **Materials:** - PowerPoint slides 11-12 - Student flow chart slide 13 - Book and passage: pg 338-340

	1. **Hook:** Ask students to reflect on the passage. Questions to ask could be: Is this the ending you expected for Julia? What do you think she will do in her future? Will she be successful? Why or Why not? What do you think her life will be like after college? 2. **Academic Language:** Introduce the academic language to students. Ask students what they think determining Importance, tone, figurative language, and connotative language mean. Support their definition if need be. - Determining Importance - Tone - Figurative language - Connotative language 3. **Complete Technology Activity:** Discuss with students how there are underlying meanings in texts and that it is necessary to determine the importance of those messages. Read the passage to the students. Break the passage down by each sentence to determine key terms and ideas. - **I Do:** Highlight, underline, and star key terms and phrases in the first sentence. Explain and model thinking of why those are important. Write down how these key terms and ideas mean self-reflection and recognition and why it is important in the text. Ask students if they have questions. - **We Do:** As a class, break down each sentence together or split students into groups and have each group break down one sentence and come up with key ideas. Present to the class, write them on the board or teacher can type it into the PowerPoint Slide. Ask students if they have questions. 4. **Complete Individual Activity (You Do):** Hand out the student flow chart sheet. Explain to students that they will choose three different key ideas and explain them further using the sentence stems. Students will complete the sentence stems and use text evidence to support their reasoning. Students will write a short paragraph summarizing their ideas and citing from the text. Collect students' paragraphs at the end of class. 5. **Formative Assessment:** Have students reflect for 3-minutes about the mini-unit in class. Allow students to write down their reflections. Collect reflections at the end of class to monitor progress. 6. **Wrap-up:** Have students share out what they reflected on about the mini-unit.
Technology pages:	PowerPoint Slides 11-12, Student Copy on Slide 13

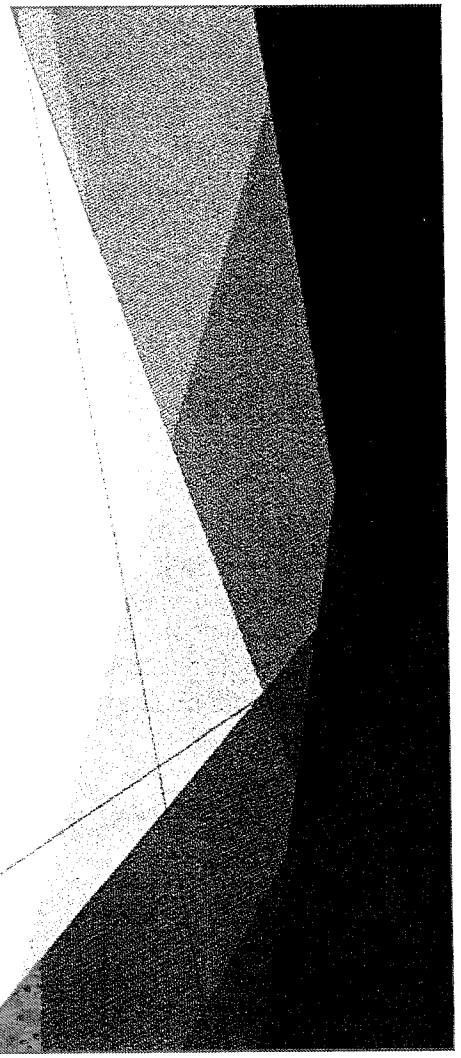
Plans for Formative and Summative Assessment linked to standards and	Formative Assessments: Lesson Plan 1: *Index Cards* - Write a 1 sentence summary of a big idea that was discussed in class. Write 1 question/statement about a concept that was confusing. - Teacher will collect index card at the end of class. Lesson Plan 2: *Think-Write-Pair-Share*

learning outcomes (objectives)	- Reflect on the points of view, write about it, share with a partner, and then share out in whole group discussion. - Teacher will collect the written reflection at the end of class. Lesson Plan 3: *3-2-1* - Write 3 key words learned, 2 new ideas, and 1 thought to think about. - Teacher will collect the written response at the end of class. Lesson Plan 4: *3-Minute Pause* - Students write a response about what was discussed in class. Give students three minutes to complete the task. - Teacher will collect written response at the end of class. * Lambert, K. (2012). *60 Formative Assessment Strategies* (pp. 1-7) [Chart]. OCPS Curriculum Services. Summative Assessment: Have students present on what they learned throughout the mini-unit. Students can share their cultural perspective diagram from Lesson 1, their poem on their experiences and events from Lesson 3, or the paragraph they wrote from Lesson 4. Students can present on any of these activities of their choosing to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge of what they learned in the best way for them. This presentation can be done using technology, such as PowerPoint, or with a poster board/another format of their choosing.

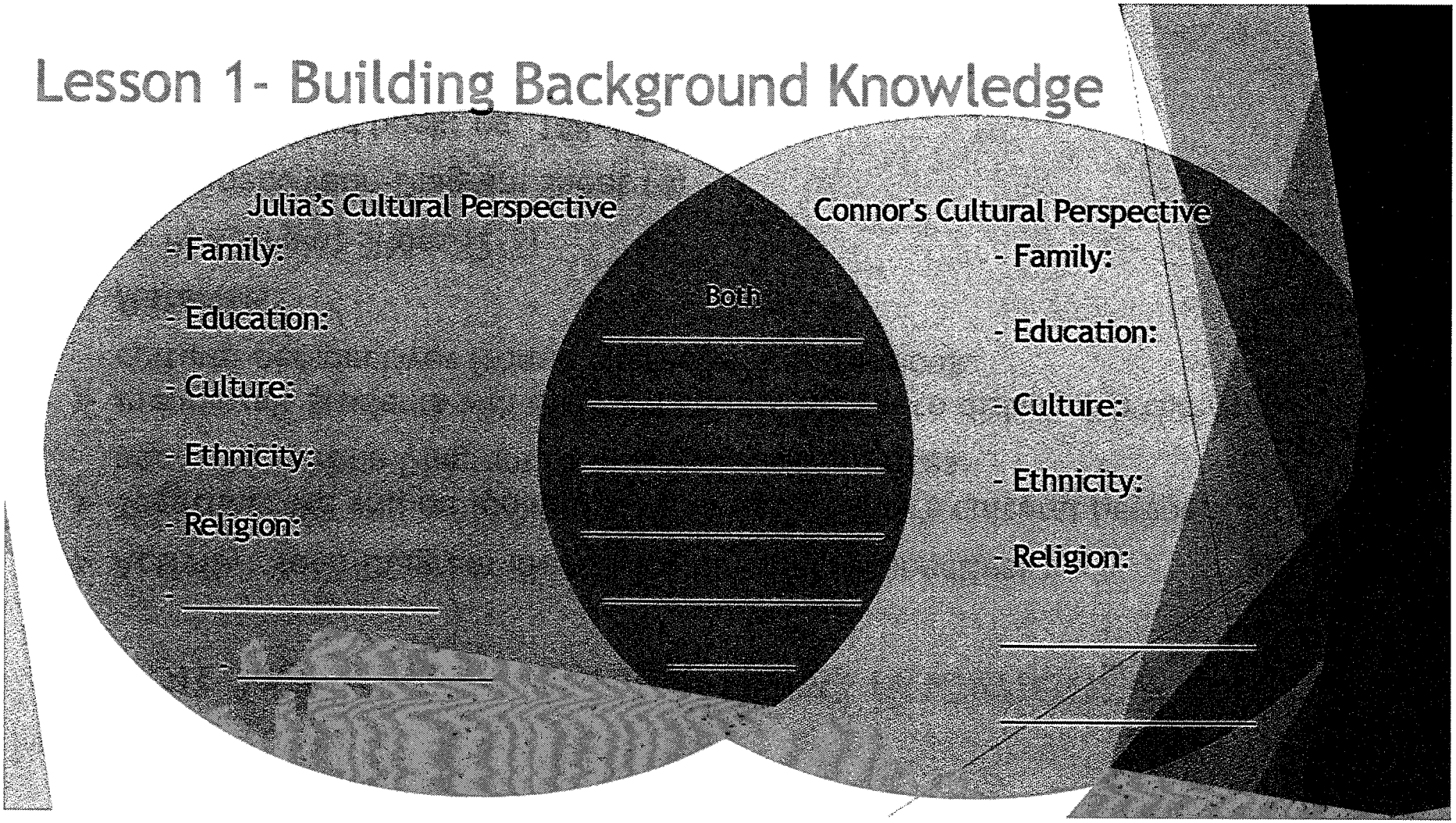
I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter

By: Erika L Sánchez

Illinois Reads Unit By: Hannah Brunken



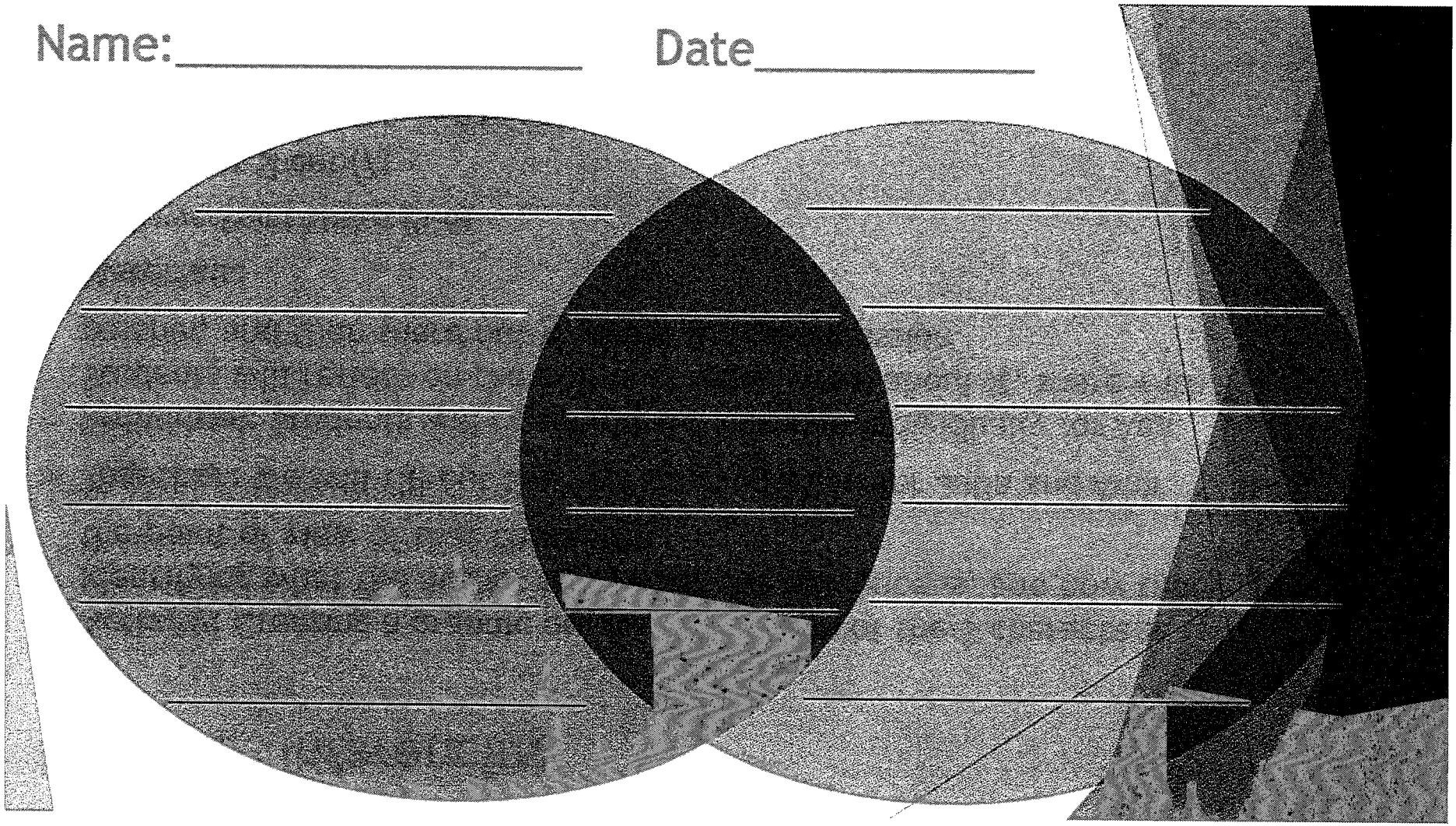
Lesson 1- Building Background Knowledge



Lesson 1- Building Background Knowledge

- **Activity:** Venn-Diagram identifying cultural Perspectives
- **Together:** We will be looking at Julia and Connor's cultural perspectives and using a Venn Diagram to distinguish differences.
- **Individual:** Students will create a Venn-Diagram to distinguish their own cultural perspectives from a character's in the book.
- **Materials:**
  - PowerPoint Slides (2-3)
  - Student Venn-Diagram Sheet (4)
  - Passage and book: pg. 188-192

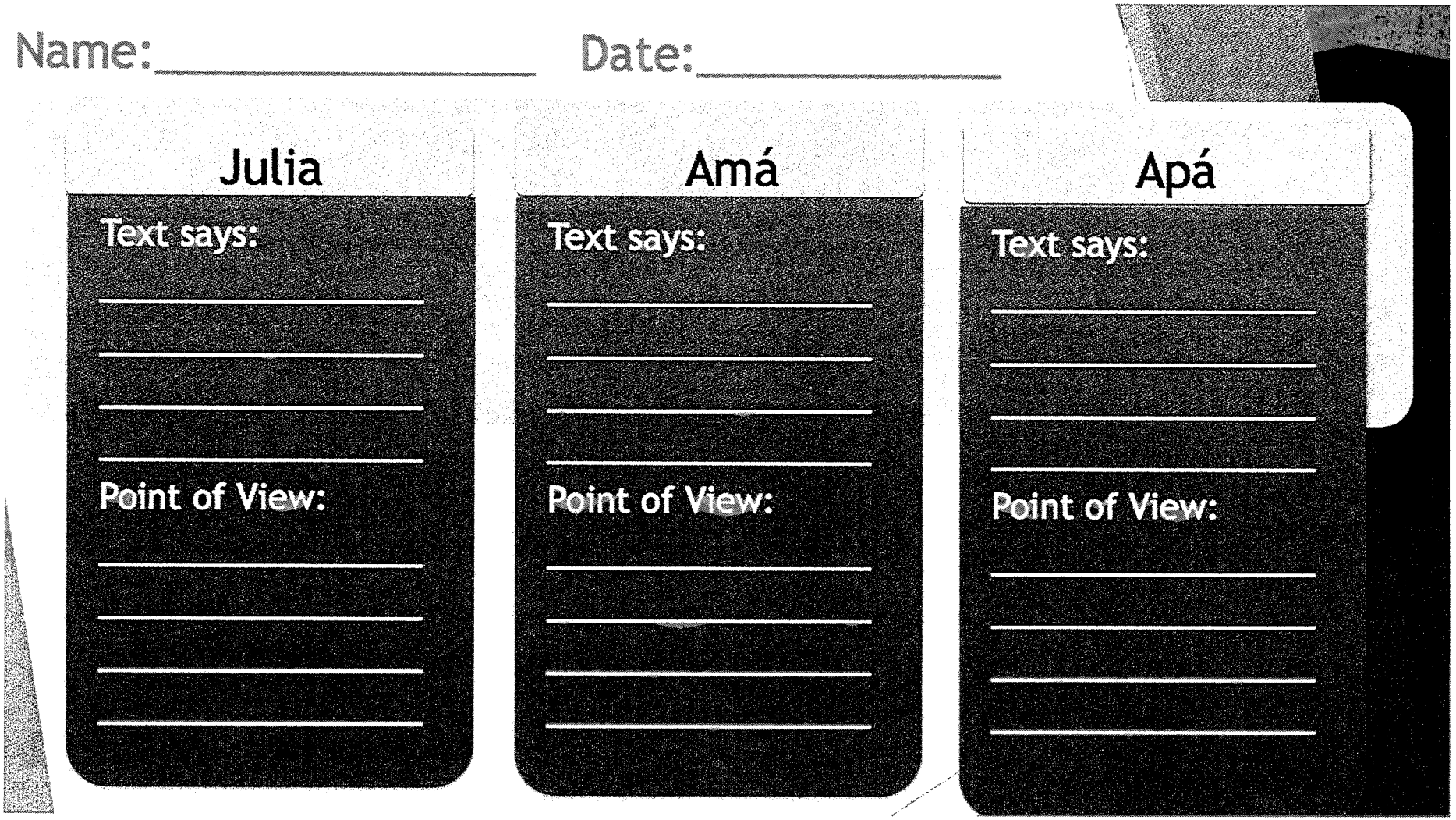
Name:_____ Date_____



Lesson 2- Inferencing

- **Activity:** Creating a graphic organizer for each of the 3 characters. Identifying what the author says, what the evidence is, and how that infers the point of view of that character.
- **Together:** We will fill out the first two together, for Julia and Amá.
- **Individual:** Students will complete the last one individually for Apá. Students will reflect on the points of view, write about it, share with a partner, and then share out in whole group discussion.
- **Materials:**
  - PowerPoint Slides (5-6)
  - Student Sheet (7)
  - Book and Passage: pg 227-229

Name:_____ Date:_____


Julia
Text says:
Point of View:
Amá
Text says:
Point of View:
Apá
Text says:
Point of View:

Lesson 2- Inferencing

Julia

Text says:

Julia: "I am not going" (pg. 228)

Julia: "What about college? What if I miss too many classes and I have to go to summer school?"(pg. 229)

Point of View:

I think Julia's point of view is that she feels hurt and frustrated because she is worried about her future and that spending to much time out of school will risk her getting into college.

Amá

Text says:

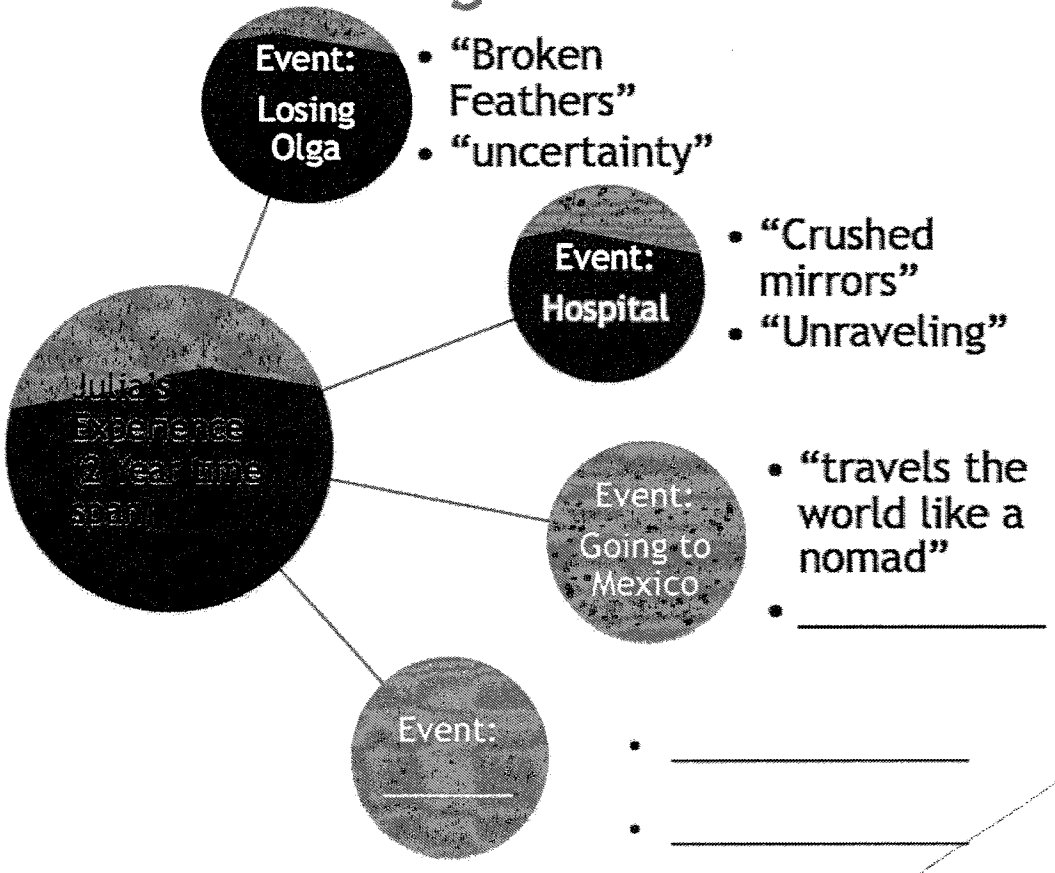
Point of View:

Apá

Text says:

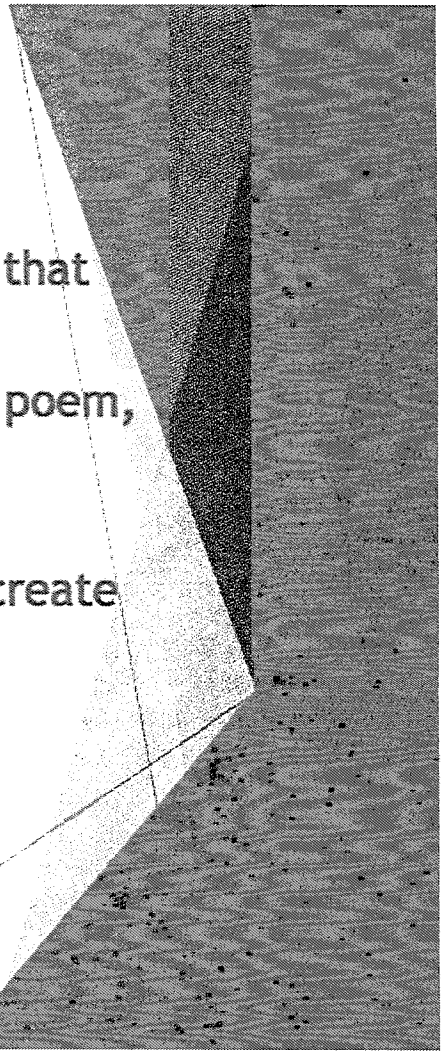
Point of View:

Lesson 3- Connecting



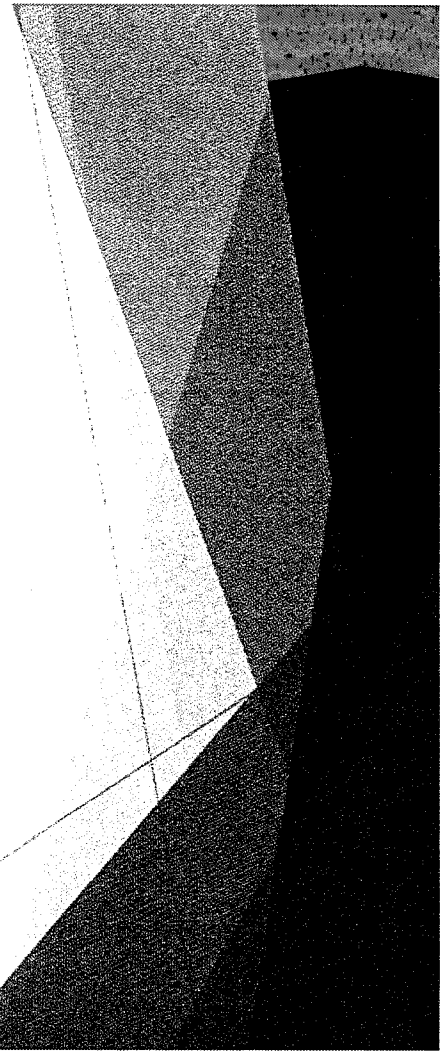
Lesson 3- Connecting

- **Activity:** Create a mind map to analyze Julia's experiences that she wrote about in a poem.
- **Together:** Create the mind map together by looking at the poem, identifying phrases that reflect an event in Julia's life, and looking at descriptor words.
- **Individual:** Create a mind map of your own experience. Recreate Julia's poem by writing your own.
- **Materials:**
  - PowerPoint Slides (8-9)
  - Student Mind Map Sheet (10)
  - Book and Passage: pg. 329-331



Lesson 4- Determining Importance

- **Activity:** Analyze the text of a passage by underlining, highlight, or staring key words or phrases. Complete the sentence stems with the key ideas and use text evidence.
- **Together:** We will analyze the passage, identifying the key words, and working to determine the author's meaning.
- **Individual:** Students will complete the flow chart with text evidence supporting these meanings. Then, students create a paragraph outlining their reasoning.
- **Materials**
  - PowerPoint Slides (11-12)
  - Student Flow-Chart (13)
  - Book and Passage: pg 338-340



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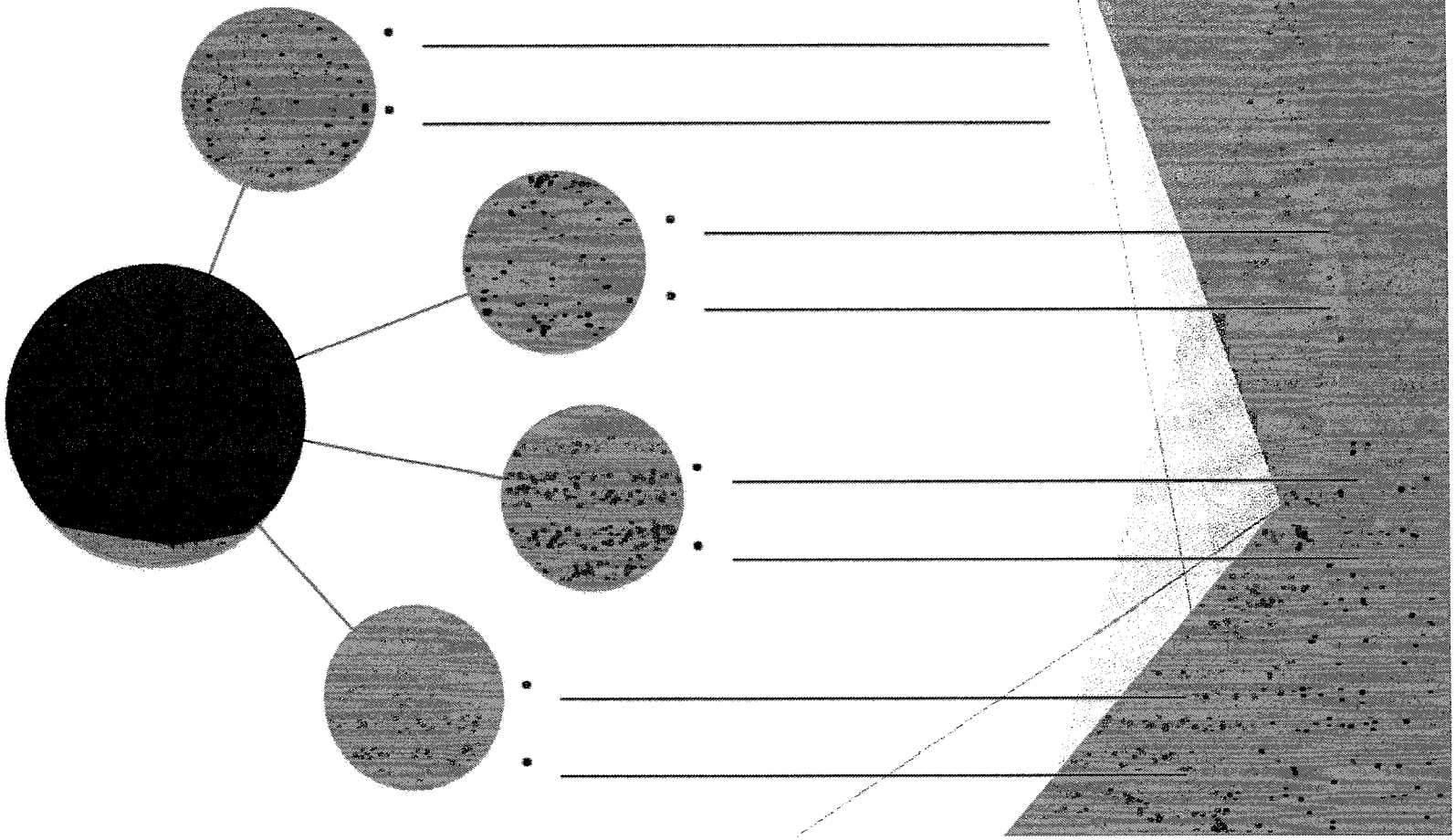
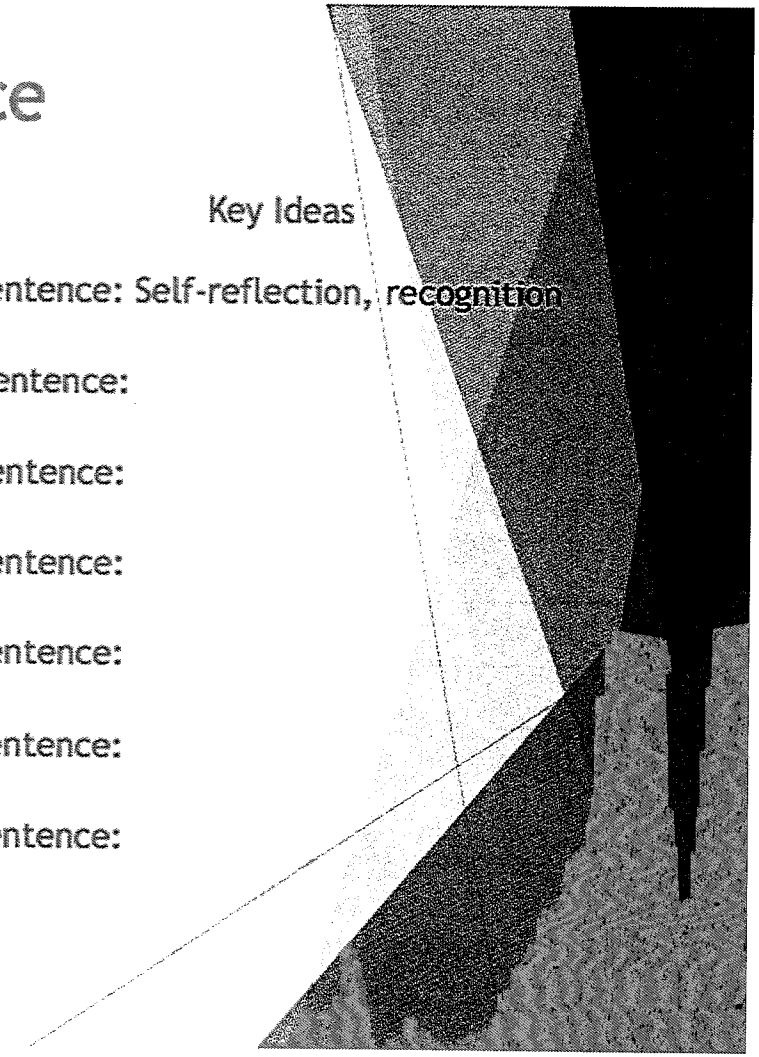


Lesson 4- Determining Importance

"I know I've come a long way, and though *it's hard*, I'm trying to give myself credit for that. If I think about it, just a few months ago, I was ready to die, and now here I am on a plane to New York City all by myself. I honestly don't even know how I was able to pick myself back up, and sometimes I'm not sure how long it will last. I hope it's forever, but how an I know for certain? Nothing is ever guaranteed. What if my brain fails me once again? I suppose the only thing I can do is keep going." (pg. 339)

Key Ideas

- 1st sentence: Self-reflection, recognition
- 2nd sentence:
- 3rd sentence:
- 4th sentence:
- 5th sentence:
- 6th sentence:
- 7th sentence:



Name:_____ Date:_____

I think the author means

_____

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because_____

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Evidence:

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I think the author means

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because_____

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Evidence:

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I think the author means

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because_____

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Evidence:

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Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*	**Synopsis** When the sister who delighted their parents by her faithful embrace of Mexican culture dies in a tragic accident, Julia, who longs to go to college and move into a home of her own, discovers from mutual friends that her sister may not have been as perfect as believed. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Sanchez, Erika	
Copyright Year: 2019	

Professional Reviews of *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (September 1, 2017 (Vol. 114, No. 1))
Grades 9-12. Julia's older sister, Olga, was always polite, respected her parents, and eagerly took up the Mexican traditions her mother insisted upon. After Olga dies in a car accident, Julia is thrust into a spotlight she's not ready for. She's too angry, too unappreciative, too American, which results in her mother shutting out her social and love life. Then Julia discovers Olga's trove of secrets, which hint at a hidden life. As Julia pursues the mystery of the real Olga, she begins to find out that more than one of her family members has secrets. This bildungsroman immigrant story captures the chaotic life of a young person trying to navigate two worlds while trying to follow her own path. Julia wants to leave Chicago and attend college, while a "perfect Mexican daughter" would stay put, get a job, and contribute to the family. Sánchez weaves these threads along with a tragic story of distant sisters to create an earnest and heartfelt tale that will resonate with teens.

Kirkus Reviews (August 15, 2017)
After the death of her dutiful older sister, Olga, Julia must deal with grieving parents and the discovery that her sister was keeping secrets. Fifteen-year-old Julia Reyes is nothing like her sister, "Saint Olga," who was struck by a semi at age 22 and was always the family's "perfect Mexican daughter": contributing at home, attending community college, working at a doctor's office, and helping their mother clean houses. Julia, on the other hand, hates living in her roach-infested apartment building in their predominantly Latinx Chicago neighborhood, and she doesn't even try to live up to her Amá and Apá's expectations that she behave like a proper Mexican young lady. After secretly snooping through Olga's room, Julia begins to suspect that Olga may have led a double life. In one of many overlong subplots, Julia starts a romance with a rich Evanston white boy, Connor, whom she meets at a used bookstore. Sánchez's prose is authentic, but it's difficult to root for Julia, because she's so contemptuous, judgmental, and unpleasant: "I do dislike most people and most things"—from "nosy" aunts, "idiot" cousins, and tacky quinceañera parties to even her "wild and slutty" best friend, Lorena, at least sometimes. An abrupt plot development involving self-harm and mental illness feels forced, as does a magically life-changing trip to Mexico in the third act. This gritty contemporary novel about an unlikable first-generation Mexican-American teen fails to deliver as a coming-of-age journey. (Fiction. 14-17)

Publishers Weekly (August 7, 2017)
Why isn't 15-year-old Julia Reyes a perfect Mexican daughter in her mother's eyes? Mostly because of her

older sister, Olga, who puts family first, listens to her parents, and dresses conservatively. Julia, by contrast, argues with her mother, talks back at school, and dreams of becoming a famous writer. When Olga dies suddenly, Julia is left wishing that they had been closer and grieving what she sees as Olga's wasted life. And when she starts to suspect that Olga might not have been so perfect, she follows every clue. Sánchez's debut novel covers a lot of ground, including Julia's day-to-day activities in Chicago, her college ambitions, her first boyfriend (who is white and comes from a wealthy neighborhood), her difficult relationship with her overprotective parents, and her search for Olga's secrets. As the book moves along, Julia's frustration with the many constraints she lives under-poverty, family expectations, and conditioning that she resents but can't quite ignore-reaches dangerous levels. Julia is a sympathetic character, but Sánchez's often expository writing keeps her and her struggles at arm's length. Ages 14-up. Agent: Michelle Brower, Zachary Shuster Harmsworth Literary. (Oct.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (September 1, 2017)
Gr 10 Up-Fifteen-year-old outcast Julia Reyes longs to attend college in New York, in order to get away from the suffocating watch of her undocumented Mexican parents in Chicago. The unusual death of Julia's older sister Olga-considered the perfect child by her family-only bolsters this desire, as her parents focus their attention even more strongly on their now only child. When Julia stumbles across unexpected items in Olga's bedroom after the funeral, she sets off on a course to discover her sister's secrets while trying to find some escape from her strict parents. Sánchez makes Julia's unflinching candidness very clear from the start, with the opening sentence providing her stark description of Olga's corpse. This attitude intermittently brings levity to heavy moments, but also heartbreak when the weight of it all comes crashing down. That honesty and heartbreak is skillfully woven throughout, from the authentic portrayal of sacrifices made and challenges faced by immigrants to the clash of traditional versus contemporary practices, and the struggle of first-generation Americans to balance their two cultures. The importance of language, a lens through which Latinxs are often viewed and sharply judged, is brilliantly highlighted through an ample but measured use of Spanish that is often defined in context without feeling forced or awkward. The author interweaves threads related to depression/anxiety, body image, sexuality, rape, suicide, abuse, and gang violence in both the U.S. and Mexico with nuance, while remaining true to the realities of those issues. VERDICT Like Isabel Quintero's Gabi, a Girl in Pieces, sans the diary format, this novel richly explores coming-of-age topics; a timely and must-have account of survival in a culturally contentious world.-Alea Perez, Westmont Public Library, IL © Copyright 2017. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Magazine (March/April, 2018)
Julia Reyes's older sister Olga was the "perfect Mexican daughter"—living at home, working at an office, and happily spending time with her parents—but readers never meet her. Instead, the book opens at dutiful Olga's tragic funeral after she is hit by a truck. Fifteen-year-old narrator Julia has spent her life being Olga's opposite—hating her family's roach-infested apartment, arguing with her parents (especially her mother), and dreaming of being a writer far from her poor Chicago neighborhood. But after Olga's death, Julia begins to search for information about her sister, and suddenly the simple narratives she has created about her family begin to unravel. Sánchez paints an evocative portrait of a Mexican American family, effectively capturing the bicultural tensions that can arise from growing up in a different country than did one's parents. The plot occasionally feels overstuffed, as threads about mental illness, gang violence, class, body image, rape, abuse, and suicide are introduced with varying success; and a romantic subplot with an affluent white boy feels shoehorned into the broader narrative. But the depiction of Julia as she processes her losses is hauntingly memorable and noteworthy in its authentic representation of culture and experience too rarely written. christina dobbs

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*
Source: bookconnections.org, NovelistPlus
International Latino Book Awards, Second Place Winner: 2017
National Book Award for Young People's Literature Finalist: 2017
School Library Journal Best Books of the Year: 2017
Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award: 2018
YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2018

South Carolina College- and Career-Ready
Standards and Indicators for
English 4

Inquiry-Based Literacy Standards (I)

Standard 1: Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.

1.1 Use a recursive process to develop, evaluate, and refine, questions to broaden thinking on a specific idea that directs inquiry for new learning and deeper understanding.

Standard 2: Transact with texts to formulate questions, propose explanations, and consider alternative views and multiple perspectives.

2.1 Analyze ideas and information from text and multimedia by formulating questions, proposing interpretations and explanations, and considering alternative views and multiple perspectives.

Standard 3: Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.

3.1 Develop a plan of action by using appropriate discipline-specific strategies.

3.2 Examine historical, social, cultural, or political context to broaden inquiry and create questions.

3.3 Gather information from a variety of primary and secondary sources and evaluate for perspective, validity, and bias.

3.4 Organize and categorize important information; synthesize relevant ideas to build a deeper understanding; communicate new learning; identify implications for future inquiry.

Standard 4: Synthesize information to share learning and/or take action.

4.1 Employ a critical stance to analyze relationships and patterns of evidence to confirm conclusions.

4.2 Evaluate findings; address conflicting information; identify misconceptions; and revise.

4.3 Determine appropriate disciplinary tools to communicate findings and/or take informed action.

Standard 5: Reflect throughout the inquiry process to assess metacognition, broaden understanding, and guide actions, both individually and collaboratively.

5.1 Acknowledge and consider individual and collective thinking; use feedback to guide the inquiry process.

5.2 Analyze and evaluate previous assumptions; test claims; predict outcomes; and justify results to guide future action.

5.3 Analyze the process to evaluate and revise plan and strategies; address successes and misconceptions; and apply learning to future inquiry.

Fundamentals of Reading

- Integrate an information (cueing) system that includes meaning (semantics), structure (syntax), visual (graphophonic), and pragmatics (schematic) to make meaning from text.
- Gain understanding by applying reading strategies of monitoring, searching, confirming, cross-checking, rereading, and self-correcting.
- Employ comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading text using schema, annotating, questioning, visualizing, drawing inferences, determining importance, summarizing, and synthesizing.
- Use metacognition to monitor meaning and adjust strategies while reading.
- Notice and analyze the styles and techniques authors use to help readers construct meaning.

Reading - Literary Text (RL)

Principles of Reading

Standard 1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

Standard 2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.

Standard 3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Standard 4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Meaning and Context

Standard 5: Determine meaning and develop logical interpretations by making predictions, inferring, drawing conclusions, analyzing, synthesizing, providing evidence, and investigating multiple interpretations.

5.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain; investigate multiple supported academic interpretations.

Standard 6: Summarize key details and ideas to support analysis of thematic development.

6.1 Analyze the development of related themes across a variety of texts citing evidence to support analysis; provide an objective summary.

Standard 7: Analyze the relationship among ideas, themes, or topics in multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

7.1 Analyze the development of theme across diverse media, modality, and format.

7.2 Analyze how literary texts and related media allude to themes and archetypes from historical and cultural traditions.

Standard 8: Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact within a particular context.

8.1 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific characters, ideas, or events develop and interact within a particular context.

Language, Craft, and Structure

Standard 9: Interpret and analyze the author's use of words, phrases, and conventions, and how their relationships shape meaning and tone in print and multimedia texts.

9.1 Evaluate the impact of the author's use of diction, conventions, figurative language, and/or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful on meaning and tone.

Standard 10: Apply a range of strategies to determine and deepen the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple-meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.

10.1 Use context clues to determine meanings of words and phrases.

Standard 11: Analyze and provide evidence of how the author's choice of point of view, perspective, and purpose shape content, meaning, and style.

11.1 Analyze how point of view and author's perspective and purpose shape content, meaning, and style, supports rhetorical or aesthetic purposes, and conveys cultural experience.

Standard 12: Analyze and critique how the author uses structures in print and multimedia texts to shape meaning and impact the reader.

12.1 Evaluate various texts to formulate a theory regarding the authors' use of structure, plot, and manipulation of time citing support from the texts.

12.2 Critique how an author's choices concerning how to structure texts, order events within the text, and manipulate time create different effects.

Range and Complexity

Standard 13: Read independently and comprehend a variety of texts for the purposes of reading for enjoyment, acquiring new learning, and building stamina; reflect on and respond to increasingly complex text over time.

13.1 Engage in whole and small group reading with purpose and understanding.

13.2 Read independently for sustained periods of time to build stamina.

13.3 Read and respond to grade level text to become self-directed, critical readers and thinkers.

Reading - Informational Text (RI)

Principles of Reading

Standard 1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

Standard 2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.

Standard 3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

Standard 4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Meaning and Context

Standard 5: Determine meaning and develop logical interpretations by making predictions, inferring, drawing conclusions, analyzing, synthesizing, providing evidence and investigating multiple interpretations.

5.1 Cite significant textual evidence to support synthesis of explicit and inferred meaning and/or in areas the text leaves indeterminate; investigate multiple supported interpretations.

Standard 6: Summarize key details and ideas to support analysis of central ideas.

6.1 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of a text including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis of the topic; provide an objective summary of the text.

Standard 7: Research events, topics, ideas, or concepts through multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

7.1 Evaluate how the use of different mediums, modalities, or formats impacts the reader's understanding of events, topics, concepts, and ideas in argument or informative texts.

Language, Craft, and Structure

Standard 8: Interpret and analyze the author's use of words, phrases, text features, conventions, and structures, and how their relationships shape meaning and tone in print and multimedia texts.

8.1 Determine the figurative, connotative, or technical meanings of words and phrases; compare and contrast how authors use and refine words or phrases.

8.2 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the text features and structure an author uses to shape meaning and tone.

Standard 9: Apply a range of strategies to determine the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple meaning words, phrases, and jargon; acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.

9.1 Use context clues to determine meanings of words and phrases.

Standard 10: Analyze and provide evidence of how the author's choice of purpose and perspective shapes content, meaning, and style.

10.1 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

Standard 11: Analyze and critique how the author uses structures in print and multimedia texts to craft informational and argument writing.

11.1 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of authors' uses of text features and structures to support similar claims.

11.2 Analyze and critique the reasoning in historical, scientific, technical, cultural, and influential argument writing.

Range and Complexity

Standard 12: Read independently and comprehend a variety of texts for the purposes of reading for enjoyment, acquiring new learning, and building stamina; reflect on and respond to increasingly complex text over time.

12.1 Engage in whole and small group reading with purpose and understanding.

12.2 Read independently for a sustained period of time.

12.3 Read and respond to grade-level text to become self-directed, critical readers and thinkers.

Fundamentals of Writing

- Employ a recursive writing process that includes planning, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, publishing, and reflecting.
- Interact and collaborate with peers and adults to develop and strengthen writing.
- Produce writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, discipline, and audience.
- Use clear and coherent written language to accomplish a purpose such as learning, enjoyment, argument, and the exchange of information.
- Monitor progress throughout the writing process and adjust strategies as needed from independence to collaboration within a writing community.
- Incorporate authors' craft techniques observed from wide reading of anchor and mentor texts across disciplines to inform, explain, convince/argue, and entertain.

Writing (W)

Meaning, Context, and Craft

Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

1.1 Write arguments that:

a. introduce a clearly articulated and well-informed claim, establish the significance of the claim and differentiate between the claim and counterclaims;

b. use relevant information from multiple print and multimedia sources;

c. assess the credibility and accuracy of each source;
d. create an organizational structure that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, warrants, and evidence;
e. develop claim and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases;
f. use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claims and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims;
g. establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline;
h. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting;
i. quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation;
j. avoid logical fallacies and demonstrate an understanding of objectivity and subjectivity;
k. provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented; and
l. include a call to action.

Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

2.1 Write informative/explanatory texts that:
a. introduce a topic;
b. use relevant information from multiple print and multimedia sources
c. organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole;
d. assess the credibility and accuracy of each source;
e. include formatting, graphics, and multimedia to aid as needed;
f. develop the topic thoroughly by selecting significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic;
g. quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation;
h. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting;
i. use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts;
j. use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic;
k. establish and maintain a consistent style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline; and
l. provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

3.1 Gather ideas from texts, multimedia, and personal experience to write narratives that:
a. develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences;
b. engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters;
c. create a smooth progression of experiences or events;
d. use the narrative techniques of dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters;
e. use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome;
f. develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting;
g. use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters; and
h. provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Language

Standard 4: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

4.1 When writing:
a. apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested; and

b. resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references as needed.

Standard 5: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

5.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Range and Complexity

Standard 6: Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.

6.1 Write routinely and persevere in writing tasks over short and extended time frames, for a range of domain-specific tasks, and for a variety of purposes and audiences.

6.4 Demonstrate effective keyboarding skills.

Fundamentals of Communication

- Employ a reciprocal communication process that includes planning, drafting, revising, editing, reviewing, presenting, and reflecting.
- Communicate using style, language, and nonverbal cues appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Use active and attentive communication skills, building on other's ideas to explore, learn, enjoy, argue, and exchange information.
- Monitor delivery and reception throughout the communication process and adjust approach and strategies as needed.
- Adjust speech, using standard English when indicated or appropriate, in a variety of contexts and tasks for presenting or participating in the social exchange of ideas.
- Acquire vocabulary from multiple forms of communication; use newly acquired vocabulary to appropriately communicate in a variety of situations and contexts.

Communication (C)

Meaning and Context

Standard 1: Interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one's own views while respecting diverse perspectives.

1.1 Gather information from print and multimedia sources to prepare for discussions; draw on evidence that supports the topic, text, or issue being discussed; develop logical interpretations of new findings; and restate new interpretations.

1.2 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners; build on the ideas of others and express own ideas clearly and persuasively.

1.3 Develop, apply, and adjust reciprocal communication skills and techniques with other students and adults.

1.4 Engage in dialogue with peers and adults to explore meaning and interaction of ideas, concepts, and elements of text, reflecting, constructing, and articulating new understandings.

1.5 Synthesize areas of agreement and disagreement including justification for personal perspective; revise conclusions based on new evidence.

1.6 Utilize various modes of communication to present a clear, unique interpretation of diverse perspectives using facts and details.

Standard 2: Articulate ideas, claims, and perspectives in a logical sequence using information, findings, and credible evidence from sources.

2.1 Present information and findings from multiple authoritative sources; assess the strengths and limitations of each source, citing supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

2.2 Distinguish between credible and non-credible sources of information.

2.3 Quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

2.4 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using standard English when indicated or appropriate.

Standard 3: Communicate information through strategic use of multiple modalities and multimedia to enrich understanding when presenting ideas and information.

3.1 Analyze how context influences choice of communication, and employ the appropriate mode for presenting ideas in a given situation.

3.2 Construct engaging visual and/or multimedia presentations using a variety of media forms to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence for diverse audiences.

Language, Craft, and Structure

Standard 4: Critique how a speaker addresses content and uses craft techniques that stylistically and structurally inform, engage, and impact audience and convey messages.

4.1 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
4.2 Evaluate the speaker's delivery of messages that present an apparent and logical perspective on the subject and support the central idea with well-chosen and well-organized facts and details.
4.3 Evaluate the effectiveness of the speaker's use of repetition, rhetorical questions, and delivery style to convey the message and impact the audience.

Standard 5: Incorporate craft techniques to engage and impact audience and convey messages.
5.1 Give extemporaneous and planned presentations that are engaging and well-crafted.
5.2 Deliver messages that present an apparent and logical perspective on the subject and support the central idea with well-chosen and well-organized facts and details.
5.3 Develop messages that use logical, emotional, and ethical appeals.

Notes:

Regulation IS - 38 School Library Materials Selection & Adoption

November 2022

I. Purpose. This Administrative Regulation establishes the Superintendent's expectations for the selection and adoption of school library materials to support and enrich the instructional program and recreational reading needs of students in the Beaufort County School District (BCSD).

II. Non-Discrimination. The BCSD affirms the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm, and/or harassment. The BCSD is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students, parents/legal guardians, staff, visitors, applicants for admission and employment, personnel, and community members who participate or seek to participate in its educational programs or activities. Accordingly, the BCSD does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, color, physical or mental disability, age (40 or older), ancestry, genetic information, national origin, or any other applicable status protected by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX or any other local, state, or federal law.

III. Definitions.

A. **Instructional Material.** Instructional materials are all materials designed for use by students and their teachers as a learning resource. They may be printed or non-printed and may include books, audiovisual materials and kits, and computer programs.
B. **Instructional Program.** School libraries should support the academic curriculum to promote student achievement by providing information resources in a variety of formats within school grade bands.
C. **Recreational Reading.** Recreational reading is the reading students choose to do on their own. It reflects the reader's personal choice of the material, within the scope of the school library's collection. Recreational reading is done for information or for pleasure, no one assigns it.

IV. Role of the School Library Professionals.

A. School Librarians at each school hold the primary responsibility for identifying, selecting, classifying, and organizing school library materials. School library materials include library books, audiovisuals, electronic resources, and other materials. Since materials are selected to provide for the broad curricular needs and interests of the school community, school librarians welcome and consider suggestions from principals, teachers, students, and other members of the school community. The school principal has the responsibility to adhere to the BCSD defined procedures and practices for the purchase of all instructional materials.
B. School Librarians should develop a school library collection which creates and sustains a diverse and accessible range of materials appropriate to the developmental and maturity levels of the students served. A well-developed school library collection provides space and resources for a variety of views and ideas and supports students as they develop the critical information literacy skills necessary to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas within a pluralistic and increasingly media-rich society.

V. Objectives for School Library Services and Materials Selection.

A. The school library is integral to and supports the school curriculum. Students are encouraged to realize their potential as informed citizens who think critically and solve problems, to observe rights and responsibilities relating to the generation and flow of information and ideas, and to appreciate the value of literature in an educated society.
B. Materials provided in school libraries will build a broad collection of knowledge representing multiple viewpoints, interests, and formats. Adhering to the South Carolina Standards for School Library Resource Collections and language defined in this Administrative Regulations, the collection will address the needs

of appropriate school grade bands and text complexity. Materials will be selected with a focus on the following objectives:

a. To provide resources for a variety of views and ideas and to support students as they develop critical information literacy skills necessary to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas in an information-rich world;
b. To develop an accurate and up-to-date library collection which meets the instructional and curricular needs of the school and its' students;
c. To encourage an appreciation and interest for both informational and recreational reading/viewing/listening;
d. To equitably provide for the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities or accessibility needs, multilingual learners, students with varying reading or maturity levels, and students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds;
e. To provide materials representative of multiple viewpoints that may include sensitive or controversial issues;
f. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, racial, and cultural groups which contribute to our local and global societies;
g. Reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community; and
h. Provide resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval.

C. School Librarians do not necessarily endorse every idea or presentation they make available for use within a library's collection. It would conflict with the public interest for School Librarians to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard criterion for selecting library material. Materials shall support and be consistent with the BCSD general educational goals and the educational goals and objectives of each individual school. Materials shall be appropriate for the students for whom they are selected.

a. The School Librarians shall use their professional training and expertise to continually evaluate the existing collection and identify areas in need of improvement. The school librarian accepts requests for materials from administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents, and establishes a school-level library acquisitions committee to examine, evaluate, and approve suggested school library materials. When selecting materials, School Librarians must consult reputable, unbiased, and professionally prepared selection aides (such as School Library Journal, Kirkus Reviews, Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, The Horn Book, and The Bulletin of the Center for Children Books). The school-level library acquisitions committee will review the entire list of suggested school library material. Items considered for purchase will be reviewed using the SCDE guidelines in addition to the following considerations:

1. Needs of the school and value to the collection;
2. Reputation and significance of author and producer;
3. Clarity, adequacy, and scope of text;
4. Validity, accuracy, objectivity, currency, appropriateness of text;
5. Organization and presentation of contents;
6. High degree of readability and/or comprehensibility;
7. High artistic quality and/or literary style; and
8. Value commensurate with cost.
9. Educational significance:
    1. Support the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.
    2. Directly support the acquisition of related standards.
    3. Contribute to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.
    4. Promote the integration of higher-level thinking skills.
    5. Reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.
    6. Adds value to the library/school collection.
    7. Reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.
10. Be of excellent quality, content, and manner of presentation.

1. Be aligned to instructional standards, as outlined in the South Carolina Department of Education College and Career Readiness Standards.
2. Be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to:
    i. No errors, validity, accuracy;
    ii. Objectivity;
    iii. Well written; and
    iv. Strong visual appeal.
3. Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.
4. Contains a value commensurate with cost.
5. High artistic quality, and/or literary style.
6. Avoid bias and adhere to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.
7. Contains clarity, adequacy, and scope of text.
8. Organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.
9. Ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.

11. Avoid pervasive vulgarity
    1. When considered as a whole, does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful manner.
    2. Does not depict or describe, in a clearly offensive way, sexual conduct.
    3. Abides by prevailing standards in the adult community as to what is suitable material for minors.
    4. Is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.
12. Appropriateness of text to the:
    1. Age and grade level of students.
    2. Maturity level of students.
    3. Content area.
    4. Reflects the contemporary community standards.

D. The approved final list is to be submitted to the principal for consideration and approval.
E. Principal approval is required for material that is likely to be controversial.
F. Upon approval of book purchasing list, school is to follow BCSD procurement practices for purchasing and acquisition. As best practice, schools are to order library/class set materials at increments not to exceed $4500, to allow for appropriate review of titles.
G. A technical review is required prior to purchasing/downloading any software, hardware, online programs, or other digital resources.
H. The purchase of school library materials must be in alignment with this Administrative Regulation and confirmed by the school principal.
I. Resource sharing shall be considered in purchasing decisions. Materials may be purchased or not purchased based on networking and collaborative relationships with other area collections and depending upon extent of need.
J. Materials will be purchased in a variety of formats with efforts made to incorporate emerging technology when they meet the criteria outlined above.
K. In accordance with Administrative Regulation OS-9 Authorized Signatures, school principals and department heads are authorized to sign all BCSD purchase orders and payment requests.
L. Gift materials will be evaluated by the criteria outlined above and will be accepted or rejected in accordance with these criteria. Gifted materials may be rejected in accordance with these criteria or additional considerations, such as available space, duplication/overlap of current resources, conflicting collection development priorities, and other related factors.

VI. Classification and Organization of School Library Materials. The classification and organization of library materials (to include cataloging, labeling, shelving, and special displays) will be determined by School Librarians to best meet the needs of the school community. A consortium catalog will be used to allow for

standardized cataloging processes and to facilitate resource-sharing opportunities between individual schools, such as interlibrary loan.

VII. School Library Collection Inventories and Analyses. School Librarians will conduct collection inventories and analyses at least once a year, to ensure accurate cataloging data/records and to identify aged, outdated, or lost materials. Generally, librarians should build library collections with the following goals:

A. As needed, at least 5% of the collection is updated annually.
B. The overall average copyright date for the fiction books, including Easy, paperbacks, audiobooks and ebooks, is no more than 15 years from the current calendar date.
C. The overall average copyright date for the nonfiction books, including Easy, audiobooks and ebooks, is no more than 5 years from the current calendar date.
D. The average copyright date for the total collection is no more than 11 years from current calendar date.

VIII. Materials Deselection. Weeding, or the regular removal of items from a library collection, is essential to maintaining a current and appealing collection. In adherence with the South Carolina Department of Education Standards for School Library Resource Collections, and to keep the library collection relevant to current and anticipated needs, school librarians will regularly weed from the library catalog based on subjective and objective criteria as follows:

A. Objective Criteria for weeding is based on collection data sourced from the above referenced collection inventories, analyses, and circulation reports. Objective criteria for weeding may include:
    a. Material exceeds overall target copyright date for the collection area as listed above.
    b. Material's circulation records are historically low or represent a significant decline from previous years. (ex. less than 2 circulations in the last 2 calendar years)

B. Subjective Criteria for weeding may include:
    a. Material is damaged.
    (ex. irreparably torn pages, covers, or bindings)
    b. Material is physically unappealing.
    (ex. outdated covers or illustrations)
    c. Material is inaccurate, biased, or depicts inappropriate stereotypes.
    d. Material is superseded by a newer or better edition/resource.
    e. Material is no longer appropriate for the maturity or reading levels of the students served.
    (ex. The school's grade level bands have changed)
    f. Material is no longer relevant to patron interests.
    (ex. Biographies of once-famous figures; multiple copies of past award winners)
C. Clarification of subjective criteria for weeding guidance from BCSD
    a. Needs of the school and value to the collection;
    b. Reputation and significance of author and producer;
    c. Clarity, adequacy, and scope of text;
    d. Validity, accuracy, objectivity, currency, appropriateness of text;
    e. Organization and presentation of contents;
    f. High degree of readability and/or comprehensibility;
    g. High artistic quality and/or literary style; and
    h. Value commensurate with cost.
    i. Educational significance:
        1. Support the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.
        2. Directly support the acquisition of related standards.
        3. Contribute to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.
        4. Promote the integration of higher-level thinking skills.
        5. Reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.
        6. Adds value to the library/school collection.
        7. Reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.

j. Be of excellent quality, content, and manner of presentation.
    1. Be aligned to instructional standards, as outlined in the South Carolina Department of Education College and Career Readiness Standards.
    2. Be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to:
        i. No errors, validity, accuracy;
        ii. Objectivity;
        iii. Well written; and
        iv. Strong visual appeal.
    3. Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.
    4. Contains a value commensurate with cost.
    5. High artistic quality, and/or literary style.
    6. Avoid bias and adhere to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.
    7. Contains clarity, adequacy, and scope of text.
    8. Organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.
    9. Ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.

k. Avoid pervasive vulgarity
    1. When considered as a whole, does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful manner.
    2. Does not depict or describe, in a clearly offensive way, sexual conduct.
    3. Abides by prevailing standards in the adult community as to what is suitable material for minors.
    4. Is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.

l. Appropriateness of text to the:
    1. Age and grade level of students.
    2. Maturity level of students.
    3. Content area.
    4. Reflects the contemporary community standards.

m. Resources should be free of political bias, unless being used to address a related standard. In this case, a broad range of views should be presented.

Adopted: July 18, 2001

Revised: October, 2007; September, 2009; October, 2017; June 2022; November 2022

Legal references:

Federal legislation:

Copyright Act of 1976, Title 17 USC Section 101 *et seq.*, effective January 1, 1978.

20 U.S.C. Code, Section 1232h, as amended.

S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:

Section 59-31-10 - Library committee.

Section 59-31-220 – Furnishing library books.

South Carolina Standards for School Library Resource Collections.

South Carolina Department of Education Model Policy for Library/Media Center Materials Selection and Reconsideration Process.

American Library Association – School Library Media Research: *Independent Reading and School Achievement. Volume 3, 2000.*

Beaufort County Schools Coherent Governance Manual:

GC-1 Board Purpose.

GC-2 Governing Commitments (GC 2.1, 2.2, 2.3).

GC-3 Board Job Description (GC-3.4.b.c.d., 3.17).

GC-6 Annual Work Plan.

GC-11 Diversity Statement and Goals.

B/SR-4 Authority of the Superintendent.

B/SR-5.8 Superintendent Accountability.

OE-1 Global Operational Expectation.

OE-3 Treatment of Stakeholders (OE-3.1, 3.3).

OE-10 Communicating with the Board (OE-10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 10.6, 10.12, 10.16).

OE-11 Communicating with the Public (OE-11.1, 11.2.a.b.c).

OE-12 Instructional Program.

OE-16 FOIA (OE-16.1, 16.2).

Beaufort County Schools

Regulation IS - 38.1 Procedures for Handling Questioned or Challenged School Library Materials

November 2022

I. Purpose. This administrative regulation establishes the Superintendent's expectations regarding procedures for receiving and handling questioned or challenged school library materials in the Beaufort County School District (BCSD).

II. Non-Discrimination. The BCSD affirms the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm, and/or harassment. The BCSD is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students, parents/legal guardians, staff, visitors, applicants for admission and employment, personnel, and community members who participate or seek to participate in its educational programs or activities. Accordingly, the BCSD does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, color, physical or mental disability, age (40 or older), ancestry, genetic information, national origin, or any other applicable status protected by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX or any other local, state, or federal law.

III. Reconsideration of School Library Materials.

A. All BCSD employees are charged with the responsibility of upholding the principle of intellectual freedom rather than defending a selected educational resource.
B. The BCSD shall be operated to promote academic freedom, the student's right to read, and the fair and reasonable competition of ideas and information. School officials may not broadly remove books from a school library based on "narrowly partisan or political" grounds that may violate students' first amendment rights to receive information and ideas.
C. Under exigent circumstances, BCSD district administrators reserve the right to institute an Administrative Review Committee to conduct a review.
D. The reconsideration process should conserve limited staff resources, discourage the monopolization of the challenge process by a few individuals, and require complainants to submit complete, substantive, and fully researched challenge requests.

IV. Rights to Challenge. Any BCSD student or employee, any parent/legal guardian of a BCSD student, and any person residing in a BCSD attendance zone may challenge specific materials found in school libraries.

A. The BCSD recognizes the right of a parent/legal guardian to ask that particular school library materials not be made available to their own children, by completing the, "Request to Opt-Out of School Library Materials Form," attached to this Administrative Regulation as Attachment 1. This form is also available on the BCSD website and at the school site.
B. Complainants may request the addition of, removal of, restriction of, or expanded access to the school library materials by completing the, "Request For Reconsideration Of School Library Materials Form," attached to this Administrative Regulation as Attachment 2. This form is also available on the BCSD website and at the school site.
C. In reviewing challenges, priority will be given to:

- Challenges filed by BCSD students (or their parents/legal guardians) who are currently and directly affected by the use of specific materials.
- Challenges filed by BCSD teachers or school/district administrators whose students are currently and directly affected by the use of specific materials.

V. School-Site Reconsideration Procedure. Upon receiving a complaint, the school administrator (or their designee) should schedule an informal conference with the complainant and the school librarian or teacher

concerned. If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily during this informal conference, the following options are made available:

A. If a student (or their parent/legal guardian) objects to specific materials located in a school or classroom library, they may request alternative instructional materials using the "Request to Opt-Out of School Library Materials Form". The school administrator or their designee shall communicate this request to the student's teachers, school librarian, and other staff as necessary.
B. If the complainant would like to request any change that broadly affects access to the material in question, the following procedure shall be followed:
    1. The school administrator or their designee should explain the steps of the reconsideration process to the complainant. Without making any specific commitments which would affect general access to the material in question, the school administrator/designee should assure the complainant and any involved parties that BCSD policy will be followed. The material in question will be removed from general use throughout the BCSD during the reconsideration process.
    2. Complainants wishing to file a formal materials challenge should do so by completing the, "Request For Reconsideration Of School Library Materials Form," in its entirety, returning a copy to the district Chief Instructional Services Officer or designee. A separate form must be completed for each material being requested for reconsideration. The form attached to this administrative regulation, shall be posted prominently on the district website, and available upon request at schools.
C. To evaluate the challenged material(s), the Superintendent or designee shall appoint a Materials Reconsideration Committee which may be composed of an odd number of the following individuals:
    1. At least one teacher with expertise in the content area and grade level;
    2. At least one school librarian;
    3. At least one school administrator;
    4. At least one parent representing a school family other than the complainant;
    5. At least one community member;
    6. At least one district-level director or coordinator with expertise in the content area; and
    7. At least one member of a School Improvement Council within the district/school;
D. When possible, each member of the Materials Reconsideration Committee should represent different schools, and none should be employed at the school for which the request has been filed. At the discretion of the Superintendent, exceptions to this rule may be made for material that is widely available at most BCSD schools.
E. BCSD Materials Reconsideration Committee and Administrative Review Committee will use the "Beaufort County School District Reconsideration Committee Checklist" attached to this Administrative Regulation as Attachment 3.

VI. Materials Reconsideration Committee.

A. The Materials Reconsideration Committee will study the complainant's submissions on the, "Request For Reconsideration Of School Library Materials Form," read/examine the referenced materials in full, and meet as a group to share and discuss their findings. The value of any material must be examined as a whole. The impact of an entire work will be considered, transcending individual words, phrases, and incidents
B. The Materials Reconsideration Committee shall complete its review and issue a written report within fifteen (15) business days of initial receipt of the formal complaint. A copy of the report shall be sent to the complainant, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education.
C. If the Materials Reconsideration Committee recommends any changes regarding access to the material in question (such as the addition/removal of the material) the Superintendent or designee will be responsible for communicating those changes to the appropriate personnel who shall ensure that such changes are made in a timely manner.
D. If the Materials Reconsideration Committee recommends the material in question be removed, the BCSD must ensure no other copies exist in school library circulation within the BCSD for the school level(s) it has been recommended for removal.

E. If the Materials Reconsideration Committee recommends the material in question is acceptable, the BCSD must immediately place such materials back into circulation.
F. Appropriateness of a book or reading material cannot be challenged again until the expiration of five (5) years from the original challenge date.

VII. Administrative Review Committee. BCSD reserves the right to appoint an Administrative Review Committee, and to conduct a review of school library materials. The Administrative Review Committee members will consist:

1. At least one teacher with expertise in the context area and grade level;
2. At least one school librarian;
3. At least one school administrator;
4. At least one district-level director or coordinator with expertise in the content area;
5. At least one parent;
6. At least one community member;
7. At least one member of the School Improvement Council within the district/school; and

VIII. Appeals Process. Complainants wishing to appeal the decision of the Materials Reconsideration Committee must do so, in writing, to the Board of Education within seven (7) business days of receipt of the committee's decision. After reviewing the committee's report on the material in question, the Board of Education will make a determination regarding the material in question within fifteen (15) business days effective from the date the appeal is requested.

Adopted: June, 2022; November, 2022

Legal references:

Federal legislation:

Copyright Act of 1976, Title 17 USC Section 101 *et seq.*, effective January 1, 1978.

20 U.S.C. Code, Section 1232h, as amended

S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:

Section 59-31-10 - Library committee.

South Carolina Department of Education Standards for School Library Resource Collections.

South Carolina Department of Education Model Policy for Library/Media Center Materials Selection and Reconsideration Process.

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B/SR-4 Authority of the Superintendent.